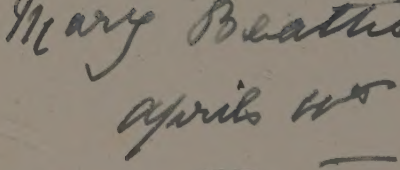
A Remembrance of

DAVID M. CROOM.



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[*SEPTEMBER* 9, 1882]

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PRINTERS TO THE QUEEN AND TO THE UNIVERSITY

FOR

THE MEMBERS OF HIS CONGREGATION

FROM

HIS SONS.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THOUGH my Father could never be prevailed upon during his lifetime to publish any of his discourses, and though he repeatedly requested that after his death no use should be made of his manuscripts, yet I cannot think that we are in any way unfaithful to his wishes in printing one or two of his sermons, not for a general and possibly unsympathetic public, but just for the little circle of ourselves whom he had gathered around him, and who knew and understood him.

The sermons are not *selected*, they are not taken as *best specimens* of his style, they are printed simply because of their associations. Most of his earlier, and to some of us, it may be, well-known sermons, he seems to have carried entirely in his memory, at any rate the manuscripts of them are not to be found.

The third was, strikingly enough, his very first "action" sermon, which, I remember him once saying, "he had ready prepared three months before the time!" It was, too, the sermon he preached—as an "action" sermon also—in Glasgow the day before his illness came upon him; and it was the last—again on a Communion Sabbath—he ever preached to ourselves.

The fourth he kept beside him for several weeks reading and re-reading it—so much had his once quick memory failed him—with the intention of preaching it last June on the day one of his namesakes was baptized. He was never able to preach it.

He was essentially a practical man, and his style was essentially a spoken, "preaching," practical style, which perhaps suffers somewhat when disassociated from the accustomed voice and gesture.

The kind words of our own minister and of Dr. Drummond tell all that can be of interest in his outer life. During that whole week of what seemed hardly consciousness, it was always of his Sabbath, his church, his congregation, his session,

that he spoke. For he lived only to be a pastor, and the key-note of his whole life in word and work was—how true it is you know—"Brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel."

D. B. C.

5 Chamberlain Road,
October 1882.

REV. MR. WHYTE'S NOTICE.

The Rev. Mr. Whyte, at the close of his sermon on Luke ix. 30, 31, said :—

THE theme which has engaged our attention this morning I have selected on account of its obvious bearing on the solemn circumstances in which we are assembled. Our thoughts this day gather with mournful interest round the honoured and greatly beloved pastor who, for thirty years, went out and in among you, and over whose remains the grave closed the other day in the presence of so many mourners, while the shadow of his loss

has fallen upon a yet wider area, not only throughout the city and in the country town which were the scenes of his labours, but throughout the whole Church of which he was so distinguished an ornament and pillar. Now that his warfare is accomplished and his work done, it is our privilege to think of him as having gone up to join the general assembly and church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and, transfigured in the light of it, to inquire and converse—with what a transport of wonder and delight!—about that decease which formed the central theme of his ministry, as it was the foundation of his hope and joy. It is no less, however, our privilege and our duty to recall what manner of man he was while amongst us,

and to try, however feebly, to form some estimate of his personal worth, of his varied powers and accomplishments as a minister of Christ, and of the value and influence of his long and laborious ministry.

This assuredly is not the place for fulsome eulogy, and no one had a greater detestation of it than our departed father. You remember how unsparingly he was wont to condemn the tone of many modern biographies, the subjects of which are so often represented either as prodigies of greatness or as angels of light, contrasting with this the fidelity with which Scripture itself records the faults and failures of its saints and heroes. Far be it from me, therefore, to use the language of exaggeration, or to claim for the deceased, what he would have been the last to claim, nay,

the first and most vehement in disclaiming, for himself, either pre-eminent greatness or immaculate perfection. We owe it, however, to the Father of Lights, who gave us this good gift, to recall thankfully and appreciatingly the many admirable qualities with which by nature and grace he was endowed, and the noble work he did with the Master's help in His Church.

Let me say at the outset that Mr. Croom's chief distinction as a public man was that he was a powerful and successful preacher of the Gospel, and a most faithful and devoted pastor. Ecclesiastical leadership was not his *rôle*, though no one was more faithful in his attendance on church courts; the excitement of public platforms was distasteful to him, though none took a keener interest in or had stronger convic-

tions about the public questions of the day; to literary fame or academic distinction he did not aspire, though few of his brethren had better-trained or more widely cultivated minds; it was not his mission to shake or startle the world with daring novelties in creed or practice, though no one was more independent in judgment or more fearless in avowing his convictions. He was content to fill a humbler place, to find his lifework in the ordinary duties of the ministry, first for fourteen years in the quiet town of Sanquhar, whose hills and people he loved so well, then in Portsburgh, to which his thoughts wandered in his dying hours, and afterwards in this place, having once and again declined what were deemed the very highest places in the field. But the work he undertook he did with all

his might, and he had his reward in the signal success which crowned his labours in both spheres, in the enlargement and growing prosperity and ever deepening attachment of his flocks, in the erection of a new and larger place of worship for each of them, in the respect and honour in which he was held throughout the Church, which at length called him to its highest post of dignity, the Moderator's chair; and I doubt not there are not a few from both congregations, and that their number will increase as the years roll on, with whom he has been reunited in the Church above, who trace their salvation, under God, to his faithful ministry, or were helped by him not a little on the way. It was his own expressed belief that what success he had had as a minister was due,

under God, to two things, first, that he *preached;* and secondly, that he preached *Christ.* This one thing he did, and he did it well.

His mental endowments were of a high order. He had a masculine and vigorous understanding that saw right into the heart of a subject, and took a good strong grip of it, not easily let go, gathering up the results and presenting them in a few pithy, pointed, memorable heads. He never soared into any transcendental heights of speculation, nor dived beyond his depth, but delighted to tread the ground of solid fact and demonstrable certainty. Hence to an English friend who asked why we in Scotland do not preach more on the second and premillennial Advent, he replied that he liked to preach nothing but what he was per-

fectly sure about. The strong common sense which dictated this remark was one of his best intellectual qualities. And it often stood him in good stead in lieu of more brilliant qualities, guiding him successfully through difficulties or past them, and saving him from mistakes into which his own guileless simplicity and non-acquaintance with rules and forms might easily have betrayed him. At college he was an excellent mathematician, a good student all round, a pupil and ardent admirer of Chalmers, whose mighty inspiration seems to have kindled his own, and whom he to his dying day regarded as the greatest force Great Britain had produced since the Reformation. Theology, however, became ultimately his favourite study, and in his extensive knowledge and

masterly grasp of this queen of sciences he had few superiors. With the imaginative and poetic faculties he was not specially gifted, he himself once honestly observing that whenever he used a figure, you might be sure it was not his own. At the same time he had a warm appreciation of all that was beautiful and grand in nature, of all that was noble in human life, and all that was interesting to the great common heart of man, a fair acquaintance with history and general literature, together with a ready wit and genial humour, a retentive memory, and an exhaustless store of anecdote, which made him one of the most instructive and delightful companions.

But great as his natural abilities and attainments were, greater than all was his moral and spiritual worth. You felt,

whenever you came in contact with him, that you were in the presence of a true man, one of nature's noblemen, sanctified and ennobled by grace. There was a manliness about him, a rugged independence that would neither crouch nor crawl before man of woman born; a transparent honesty that had nothing to conceal, and spoke out frankly and fearlessly all that was in his heart; an entire freedom from pretence, and cant, and sentimentalism, and false dignity; a sincerity that gave the telling accent of reality to all he said and did, and made him "best seem the thing he was;"

"His tears pure messengers sent from the heart;
His heart as far from fraud as earth from heaven;"

a Knox-like courage and capacity of moral indignation in testifying for truth and righteousness, and in rebuking sin; a

strength of will that made him most tenacious of his purpose, and a fervour and intensity of moral enthusiasm that stirred your soul like a trumpet.

But alongside of all this strength and vehemence was one of the largest and tenderest hearts that ever beat within a human breast. It overflowed with the milk of human kindness, and was without one drop of gall. You felt it in the warmth of his greeting, in the strong grasp of his brotherly hand, in the ready sympathy with which he entered into all your concerns and took you into his confidence, in the interest he showed in the welfare of all about him, in the trouble he would take to oblige, in the open-handed generosity that evoked many a beggar's benison and made many a widow's heart to sing for joy; and not least

in the charity that thought no evil, and spake no evil of any brother man, that hoped all, believed all, endured all, and would find something good to say even where he could not but condemn. What he said of the late Dr. John Brown, that he was the very embodiment of the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, was largely true of himself.

Withal one could not fail to be struck by his deep humility. His estimate of his own character, abilities, life, and work was a very humble one. He was often very desponding about himself. He did not usually or frequently exult on the sunlit peaks of personal assurance; his hours on the transfiguration mount were the exception and not the rule; he was far oftener down in the valley treading the dusty road of common life, or fighting the demon of

depression and doubt. Of late he was often heard to say regarding his own spiritual state, "If I know and believe anything under the sun, I know and believe the gospel; and therefore as it is written, he that believeth shall be saved, I ought to feel that I am safe; but when I look to myself, and try to discover in my character and life the evidences and fruits of faith, I am at once deprived of the peace and comfortable assurance that should spring from faith." Writing to a friend not long before his death he says, after remarking on the greatness of Chalmers, whose life he was re-reading: "Yet how humble and self-abased he was! How clear views of the gospel he had, and how plain and pointed in his enforcement of it, and yet how uncertain he was at times of his own personal

salvation!" I often envy those who seem to have no doubts whatever as to their being in Christ and safe for eternity. They are further 'ben' than I am."

And yet he was on the whole a remarkably cheerful Christian. There was nothing morose or ascetic in his religion. Whether at his own fireside or table, or in the company of his brethren, in which he ever greatly delighted, or in the social gatherings of old or young, he was usually the soul of the meeting, and would often say that no one had such good reason to be cheerful as the Christian, and that though older in body he was as young in spirit as ever. And this cheerfulness was all the more remarkable that it was maintained in spite of frequent depression even to the end—first amid the loneliness of his death-smitten

home, and then for the last three years under the effects of the stroke which prostrated his strength and compelled him to abandon his loved employ. This enforced inactivity was to him one of the sorest trials. Often would he say, "Never wish for a life of idleness." And nothing could exceed his gratification and gratitude to God when he found himself able once more to address you at the Communion table, and afterwards, though for once only, in April last, to preach a full discourse, his text on that occasion being the very text of his first communion-sermon, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He again addressed you, and for the last time, at the Communion in July on our Saviour's utterance on the cross, "I thirst."

These then were the qualities of mind and heart which, together with his powerful voice and abounding physical energy, went to make him the noble preacher that he was. Full justice will be done this afternoon to his qualities as a preacher, but I cannot pass without reminding you how earnestly and fervently he preached the old simple gospel, how faithfully he proclaimed the whole counsel of God, and how tenderly and powerfully he pleaded with you, as a dying man with dying men, to be reconciled to God, to be justified by faith, to look to the cross and be saved. This house will long continue to ring in memory's ear with the tones of that voice, now rising from step to step of his argument to a triumphant climax that took you fairly by storm, now piercing you with

some sudden, startling, searching question, and now melting you with its tender pathos and yearning wail of pity as of a mother for her lost children.

What he was to you as a pastor you know full well. He was a Barnabas as well as a Boanerges, a son of consolation as well as a son of thunder. He had the true pastor's heart. For thirty years he has gone out and in among you, rejoicing with them that rejoiced, and weeping with them that wept, baptizing your children and many of yourselves, marrying your sons and daughters, and going with you to the place of graves. He loved the children, and they loved and trusted him. He won the confidence of the young men, to whom he was as a father, and to many of whom in all parts of the world his memory will

be ever dear. To myself he was more as an elder brother than aught else, and I shall ever feel myself his debtor for his wise counsel, his unfailing interest and sympathy with me in my work, for his instructive and stimulating conversation, and for a friendship which was never broken, and which I value as one of the cherished treasures, alas! that I must now say memories, of my life. I feel myself poorer and weaker to-day by his decease, and while ready to exclaim with Elisha, when Elijah was snatched away from him, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," I pray the God of Elijah to cause to rest upon me a double portion of His spirit.

His last illness was short and sharp. Though ailing somewhat for a week or two,

no danger was apprehended till the morning of Saturday the 2d inst., when on attempting to rise out of bed, he fell to the floor, in consequence, it is believed, of weakness in the heart. Erysipelas in the head supervened, followed by congestion of the lungs, under which complication of maladies, his vital powers, already much impaired, great as they naturally were, were forced, though not without a struggle, to succumb. He passed away on the morning of Saturday the 9th. As the nature of his illness virtually cut him off from all conscious or intelligent interest in this world, he left no deathbed testimony, and no special message to his flock. But this he did not need to do, for a nobler testimony than that of his life and work, it were difficult to find. An old minister once said to Whitefield :—" Mr. Whitefield,

what a glorious deathbed testimony we shall have from you!" "You are quite mistaken," was the great preacher's reply, "I shall die silent; God intended me to testify for Him during my life, not at my death." And his prediction came true. In like manner your late pastor leaves you the testimony of a holy life, and of a long and faithful, and earnest ministry; see to it, I beseech you, that it does not rise up as a testimony against you in the great day when he and you must both give in your account, he of his ministry, and you of your treatment of his message. What reception then have you given to the gospel he preached and lived? Have you closed with it by faith, or are you still in your sins? Is your heart the trodden way, gospel-hardened and impervious to all impression? or the

rocky ground that yields nothing but empty profession, "tall talk," and ephemeral excitement? or the thorny ground wherein religion is choked by the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches? or the good soil, receiving the truth in the love of it, and yielding the precious fruits of righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost? I charge you this day, as though the dead were speaking to you through me, speaking to you from those dumb lips, and from yonder closed grave's mouth—nay, rather as though One greater than either of us did beseech you by us, I pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. By the warnings and invitations your minister addressed to you; by the holy example he set before you; by the impressions you have received from his ministry; by the affection you bore him,

and by the hope you cherish of meeting him again in glory; by the value of your immortal souls, and by all that has been done to save them; by all that can allure, and by all that can alarm, I implore you, as all of us shall meet at yonder judgment seat, to accept the salvation he preached to you, and lead the life he enjoined. For you to live may it be Christ, and to die shall be gain.

REV. DR. DRUMMOND'S NOTICE.

The Rev. Dr. Drummond, at the close of his sermon on Revelation ii. 10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," said :—

WHO of you doubts that that holds good of that minister of Christ of whom your thoughts are so full to-day ?

A few weeks ago I read on a tombstone in a Bavarian village graveyard a simple inscription in German to this effect, "Far away from the eye : To the heart ever near." So are you saying with reference to him.

He has passed from our sight; and

though till now I have made no direct mention of him, I know that all through my words you have been sending the current of loving memories and application. For was he not markedly faithful, endeared to us for ever as "a beloved brother" who had "obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful"?

I hardly know, my friends, why I should be honoured to speak here to-day of Mr. Croom. There are others who knew him longer and better than I, who could have more fully sketched his course and traced his character in the lines of affection and truthfulness: Yet I loved him well; and, when asked, the friendship of five-and-twenty years could not but be ready to lay a little wreath of love on his coffin.

As with many other ministers, his outward life was comparatively even in its flow,

and marked by no startling events. He was born in Perth on 12th June 1810. From the tenderness with which I have heard him allude to the piety of his mother, I should infer that, as so often, the maternal influence was blessed to his heart, and may have helped to shape his aims and plans. He attended the Arts Classes in the University of St. Andrews, and in 1829 he entered the Theological Hall of the United Secession Church under Professors Dick and Mitchell.

He was ordained in the South Church, Sanquhar, on the 10th of January 1838, as colleague to the Rev. James Reid, who died in 1849. When in Sanquhar, he took a warm interest in the Morisonian controversy, and contributed his share to the discussion of the exciting questions by a

publication entitled "Harmony and State of Doctrine in the Secession Synod."

In 1841 he was called to Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, to be colleague to Dr. John Brown, and in 1845 to Regent Place Church, Glasgow, to be colleague to Dr. Heugh. Both of these calls to important spheres he declined.

He was, however, in 1852 led to accept an invitation from this congregation, which then worshipped in the Vennel, Portsburgh, and the pulpit of which had become vacant by the translation, in the close of the previous year, of Mr. Robertson to the newly-formed congregation of Shamrock Street, Glasgow. Mr. Croom was inducted in Portsburgh on the 29th of June 1852.

In a few years you resolved to build for yourselves this larger and more conveni-

ently situated church; and in May 1859 it was opened and occupied by you for public worship.

Here Mr. Croom continued to labour among you with unabated vigour and ever-growing influence, esteem, and affection, till about the year 1870, when his health began to give way, and he was sent for a time to recruit to Switzerland. There he not only gathered strength, but almost a passion for the land, which drew him afterwards back to it again and again.

At length you judged it best that he should have one to divide with him the work among you, and your choice fell on him in whose able ministrations, cordial co-operation, and unbroken fellowship from the beginning of 1874 till now he found so much satisfaction and happiness.

In May 1877 a sore bereavement smote him in the unlooked-for departure, after a few days of great suffering, of the loved and loving wife of thirty years.

In 1878 Mr. Croom received from his Church its highest honour of the Moderatorship of the Synod. And no better text could he have chosen, as giving the key to the whole of his own ministry, than when he pressed home on his brethren, at the opening of the following Synod, the words (Matt. xvii. 8), "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."

After that his preaching soon drew to a close. In the summer of 1879 he took the place, on a Communion Sabbath, of his friend Mr. Buchanan, then of Greyfriars Church, Glasgow, who was laid aside for

the time by illness, but who, now happily restored, we trust may be long spared to do effective work for our Church as Foreign Mission Secretary.

Mr. Croom conducted the services with all his accustomed fervour. During the following night, however, he was suddenly seized with violent illness, accompanied with periods of unconsciousness, so that for several days his life was despaired of. He rallied and was removed home. But he never recovered. His strength was weakened in the way. Though his buoyancy of spirit remained, and he had a longing for the loved work of preaching, he was physically incapacitated, he was wisely interdicted, and only two or three times did he publicly address you at the Communion table.

And now, after forty-four years of active service in the ministry, thirty of which have been spent among you, his voice is still in the grave. After a few weeks' illness, and labouring under a combination of ailments, during the latter stages of which he was to a large extent unconscious, he fell asleep on the morning of Saturday the 9th inst., and on Tuesday last you bore him lovingly to his long home, and gently laid him there to rest till the Resurrection morning.

You have already to-day heard told with touching fitness, truth, and beauty, what our beloved friend was in the more private and personal relations of life: how faithful he was in the pastoral duties of his office, and with what a wise loving-heartedness he went in and out among you in all your

different and varying circumstances; how he was every one's friend, the genial companion, the trusted counsellor, the experienced spiritual adviser, the tender sympathiser, the soothing comforter, the ready and generous helper: how honest, how transparent, how manly, how free from uncharitableness, how far above everything mean or manœuvring, how humble, how prayerful, how Bible-loving! And I doubt not that each of you has his own cherished saying to quote, his own incident to tell of the big-hearted man.

It was as a preacher that he stood out in the more public view.

He was not indifferent to general questions, and on some, as that of State churches as an invasion on the freedom and rights of Christ's spiritual kingdom,

he was not backward to express his decided convictions.

But his strength was not given to church courts, to the platform, or the press. His pulpit was his throne and joy, and there he shone with peculiar power. I think I know no minister whose mind and heart were so entirely devoted to his preaching. He thought about it, talked about it, wrote about it, read for it, prepared for it, and prayed over it, with an unwearied constancy and heartiness that proved it his delight, not less than his felt duty and responsibility.

And he had his reward. I do not mean that he was popular. *That* he was from the beginning of his ministry till its close; and that, as an instrument of usefulness, he did not undervalue. But are there not

those of you here to-day who could rise up and say that, apart from the interest and pleasure of listening to him, it was, with the blessing of God, by his mode of setting before you Divine truth, that you were impressed, arrested, convinced, saved, that you attained to clearer and growing conceptions of the Word of God, and felt its applicability and power to meet all the wants of your souls?

And so could others elsewhere testify who have heard him on rarer occasions than you.

And who wonders? The truths he constantly dwelt on were the highest and central. Trivial themes were passed by. He "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The light of the Cross was ever

on his face. His theology was pre-eminently evangelical and practical. He delighted to exhibit the love of God in redemption, to keep the way to Calvary ever open, and to press the large and free offers of the Gospel.

And he preached because he believed. You could not help feeling, as you listened, that there was a man to whom the truths he uttered were matters of life and death, on which his own soul rested with an unshakeable faith, and for which he would have been ready to die, in the spirit of a Polycarp, or of those Covenanting heroes whose memories haunted the hills of his first ministry.

You remember, too, the earnestness and holy violence with which he taught and entreated you—how fearless of repetition, and with a noble negligence of the mere graces

of language, he would not rest till he had made clear what seemed to him the mind of the Spirit; how his faith sent fire through the truth, and his eye glowed, and his voice swelled and trembled with the power and pathos of persuasion; and even when he was roused to thunder-toned denunciation of wickedness and unbelief, you felt that there was beating through all, a heart of love, ready to break into tears of pity.

And all this came home to you who knew him enforced by his own walk and life of faith. How consistent he was! I have been with him on week-days and on Sabbaths, have listened to him in the pulpit, and sat with him in quiet talks by the fireside, have seen him in his family and among strangers, have wandered with him at home and in other lands, have heard his happy

laughter, and looked into his tear-dewed eye, have sat by him on sick-beds, and when he seemed nigh unto death. And ever and everywhere he was the same faithful, God-fearing, Christ-loving, happy believer.

What a privilege, my brethren, to have been of his flock and friends! What a responsibility!

What has been the influence of his life and labours upon you? Oh, I trust that of not a few of you he will be able at the coming of the Lord Jesus to say—"Ye are our hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing."

If his life has been fruitless for you, let his death now speak, and lead you to believe on the Saviour he trusted, to love the God he served, and lean upon the Spirit of grace that was his stay. Then death itself shall only re-unite us amid the endless felicities

of our heavenly Father's house, and we too shall wear the crown of life.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."—Amen.

I.

A CONTRAST AND A QUESTION.

I.

A CONTRAST AND A QUESTION.

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?—1 PET. iv. 18.

I SHALL not dwell on the connection of the text with the context. I take for granted that the text refers to the final judgment, when small and great shall appear before God and receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. It is of that event which so deeply concerns us all that the apostle is speaking when he says, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" In calling your attention to this text we shall consider—

I. The thing here supposed or asserted, "If the righteous scarcely be saved." II. The startling question founded on it, "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

I. The thing here supposed or asserted, "If the righteous scarcely be saved."

Let us consider first who the righteous man is. In the Bible the idea of a righteous man includes two things, that he is a justified man, and also a regenerated or sanctified one. He is a justified man, that is, one who stands right in the view of God's law—one on whom the law's sentence of condemnation cannot be executed. In himself he is not righteous—is not what the law requires, and is worthy of condemnation. He is righteous only by having the Righteousness of Christ imputed to him or put on him. Christ in our stead as

well as in our nature perfectly obeyed the law, and that both in its precepts and penalties. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and thereby fulfilled all its righteousness, performing all its requirements, and enduring and exhausting the whole amount of its curse. All that it commands He did, all that it threatens He bore. And this work of His in thus fulfilling the law is in the Scriptures called "His Righteousness." It is the Righteousness which He wrought out; it is the Righteousness which He brings near to the ungodly and the sinner, and which is "unto all and upon all them that believe."

Now when any sinner believes on Christ, believes Him to be "Jehovah our Righteousness," that Righteousness is said to be imputed to him, that is, he is dealt with by

God as if he had himself wrought it out,—as if he himself had done and suffered what Christ has done and suffered for him—in other words, he is dealt with by God as if he were not a sinner at all, but a perfectly righteous person, as perfectly righteous as Christ Himself. He is acquitted and accepted of God as one against whom the law has now no claim of penalty. He cannot be brought again under its condemnation any more than Christ Himself. He is righteous through the Righteousness of Christ put upon him, or imputed to him. He is righteous because right with the law.

But he is "righteous" in another sense, in the sense of being regenerated, in the sense of being and doing what is right. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," says an apostle, and his desire and en-

deavour are to do righteousness; that is, to be and do what the law requires.

Not only is Christ's Righteousness put upon him as a robe to cover him, but a personal righteousness is wrought within him. Such a regenerating change has passed upon him that he now habitually aims to be and do what is right, not merely what he and others may think, but what God's law says, is right. It is not uncommon for persons to say that they endeavour to do what is right, and bid others do the same; but then their standard of right is a low and an erroneous one, —simply their own idea of what is right, so that what is right in their eyes is often very wrong in God's. The right they do themselves and advise others to do, is simply sin, the opposite of the righteous-

ness enjoined by God. The only true standard of right is His law or word. It is perfect and unchangeable, the same for all time; and that only is right which it sanctions or commands.

Now the "righteous" man is one who is endeavouring to conform to this standard, to bring his thoughts and feelings and aims —his entire character in short, into harmony with it, and who has in some measure succeeded.

These two things then are included in what goes to constitute a righteous man. Christ's atoning righteousness is imputed, and in virtue of it he is accounted righteous in the view of the law; and a personal righteousness is being wrought within him in virtue of which he is being conformed to the requirements of the law. As yet, he is

far from being perfectly conformed to it, but a period is approaching when he shall be. The first of these two things is essential to the second. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to us is the first step toward the production of a personal righteousness in us. Till this imputed righteousness be put upon us from without, an inherent righteousness will never be wrought from within. In other words, till we are pardoned through Christ's atoning death we can never become holy; till we are reconciled to God we can never be conformed to His will; till we are justified we never can be sanctified. Acceptance with God must even precede all true heart-obedience to His will.

Such then is the righteous man. Now mark what is said of him. It is said he is "scarcely saved." Salvation here refers to

his final salvation, to his reaching at last the blessedness and purity and glory of heaven. It does not refer to a present salvation, for the righteous man is already saved. He is righteous, that is, as we have seen, he is justified, is in a state of pardon, and of acceptance with God. Of him it can be said truly that even now and here he is saved. The language here refers exclusively to his final salvation, to his attaining the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. "At that day," he shall indeed be saved—saved in the fullest sense—he shall enter into the very joy of his Lord.

But while the righteous man shall thus be finally saved the text says he will "scarcely" be so. The righteous is "scarcely saved." Now what does that imply?

Whatever it implies, it does not imply that his salvation at "that great day" is at all a doubtful matter. The text positively affirms that he is then to be saved. No doubt or uncertainty attaches to his being saved at last. He is a believer, and therefore it is that he is a righteous or justified man, but he that "believeth shall be saved." His salvation cannot be frustrated or hindered. It is certain, as certain as the judgment itself, as certain as that the decisions of the Judge on that day shall be righteous. Yes! he that believeth not only is, but shall be saved. Here is no uncertainty. He shall be saved, all given revelation proclaims this. It is the language of every perfection of God—of every decree in the divine purpose—of every drop in the blood of atonement—of

every promise in the Bible—of every syllable in the intercession of Christ—of every fact in the history of redemption—all proclaim in clear and unmistakeable terms, "he that believeth shall be saved."

If then the word "scarcely" does not imply doubt or uncertainty as to his final salvation, what does it imply?

The word translated "scarcely" means "with difficulty," "with labour." "If the righteous be with difficulty, or with hard labour saved," etc. Take some illustrations of the word as it occurs in the Bible. In Acts xiv. 18, it is said that Paul and Barnabas "scarce" restrained the people of Lystra from offering sacrifice to them under the notion that they were the gods Jupiter and Mercury. They did restrain them, but it was with difficulty (μολις).

In Acts xxvii. 7, it is said of Paul and those in the ship with him, on the voyage to Rome, that "We were 'scarce' (μόλις) come over against Cnidus," that, is we were come over against Cnidus, but it was with difficulty. In verse 8 it is said, "And hardly passing it." The word "hardly," the same as that rendered "scarcely," means with difficulty. In verse 16 it is said, "We had much work to come by the boat." The phrase "much work" is the same in the original as that here rendered "scarcely," and means we had "much difficulty" in coming by the boat. It required the greatest exertion. In Rom. v. 7, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die;" "with difficulty" would one be found who would lay down his life for a merely righteous man.

In all these the word is the same as that rendered "scarcely" in our text, which therefore may be read thus: "If the righteous 'with difficulty' be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The righteous shall without fail be finally saved,—shall at the last reach the heavenly glory, but then it will be "with difficulty."

Now the question is, Wherein does this difficulty, this "scarcely" lie?

I answer *first*, negatively, that it does not lie in any defect in the gospel, as if the scheme of mercy it reveals were in any degree inadequate, or nothing more than barely adequate to the salvation of the righteous.

It does not mean, for example, that there is any lack or stint of efficacy in the atoning blood of Christ, as if it were *just*

equal to the work of atonement, and nothing more. It is of infinite value. It is the "precious blood of Christ;" blood so precious that its price cannot be estimated. The difficulty, the "scarcely," does not lie there.

Neither does it lie in any lack or stint of love, or of willingness to save on the part of God. The language does not mean that He can be persuaded to save, but only with difficulty:—He does save, but it is with reluctance, and just a little more reluctance would induce Him to abandon the work of salvation He has already begun in the righteous. There is no lack or stint of love or willingness on His part. The gift of His Son to die for our sins is proof all-sufficient of that.

Nor does it lie in any lack or stint of

power in His saving grace, as if His grace, or the influence of His Spirit, were scarcely able to finish the work of salvation, which it has so auspiciously begun in the soul of the righteous,—as if it were almost exhausted by what it has already done, so that while it does save, it can do no more: its strength is spent. No, Brethren! His saving grace is not only mighty, it is almighty. Exercise, however frequent and great, does not exhaust or weaken it.

Nor, once more, does the difficulty lie in any condition or terms he has affixed to salvation. There are terms, if they may be so called, but then these are the easiest possible. "He that *believeth* shall be saved." That is all, that is enough. Faith brings us into a state of salvation at first, and the same faith will continue and keep us in it

to the end. He that believeth, only believeth, not only is saved, but shall be. Can any terms be easier than simple faith or confidence in Christ? We are not asked to undertake some great or impossible task: we are not asked to ascend up to heaven to bring Christ down from above, or to descend to the depth to bring up Christ from beneath. No; "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth—that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

On the side of God, then, and the scheme of redeeming mercy, there is no difficulty at all. Salvation is easy, as easy as bathing seven times in Jordan was to Naaman the Syrian, as easy as looking to the brazen

serpent was to the wounded Israelite, as easy as resting when weary on that which can support us.

Wherein, then, does it lie? I answer, *secondly* and positively, it lies, on man's part, in the effort he must make to maintain his faith in power and growth, and thereby to reach the final glory.

The attaining of salvation, or the Christian life, is compared in Scripture to the running of a race. In common life what an effort must be put forth in order to win a race! It is at length won, but only with difficulty—by the forthputting of the utmost effort, by straining every nerve and energy; a less effort, and it would have been lost.

Again, the attainment of the final salvation is compared to a fighting and a

wrestling. In such a contest in common life all the strength and pith a man has are brought into action. There is a struggling and a straining, a grasping and a withstanding, and the successful combatant wins the victory, but it is with difficulty. He gains it, but had there been less of effort on his part he would have lost it. As it was, the victory often appeared doubtful. He was near being thrown down and seemed overcome, and it was only by exerting all his energy that he came off victor in the contest.

The attaining of salvation is compared to striving. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." The gate of heaven may be entered, and will be entered, but not without "striving." What effort is implied in the word "strive"! It literally signifies to "agonise."

There is no sitting still, and doing nothing. No taking things easy. There is resolute effort, conflict, anxiety.

Such are the similitudes employed to illustrate the Christian life. The "righteous" man is saved, shall be saved, and that finally and for ever. There is no doubt or uncertainty about his final salvation as a fact. He shall without fail attain to it. But mark, not without difficulty, not without determination and conflict, not without fear and trembling.

For consider what has to be done ere we can reach and be prepared for the final glory —the final salvation.

We have the devil and his emissaries to contend with, and overcome. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wicked-

ness in high places," and can we do this without a struggle which will tax our faith and patience and strength to the utmost?

We live in a sinful and ensnaring world, in the midst of allurements and temptations which the devil, as the god of this world, throws around us, and which are adapted to our peculiar temperament and weakness; and can these be overcome without an effort, without watching and praying and striving, and keeping the heart with all diligence? Like the Christians more immediately referred to in the text, we may be exposed to trials and sufferings and loss for the sake of our religion; and can these be borne patiently, and the hold kept steadfastly on Christ, without earnest endeavour?

We have evils within us to contend with, as well as evils without us. We have the

corruptions of our own depraved nature to mortify—pride, vanity, envy and malice, self-will, love of the world or covetousness, which usually grows with age, vile passions and appetites and tendencies. We have these to overcome and crucify. They must be overcome or crucified ere we reach the final glory. We cannot take them with us into heaven. "Nothing that defileth" can enter there. They must be conquered and crucified here; and can this be done without difficulty, without watching and striving and praying that our faith may grow and not fail?

Then, finally, we have graces to cultivate, those graces and virtues, the perfection of which is essential to heaven, and makes heaven. And can this be done without difficulty? Can the husbandman cultivate

his fields, and raise his crops, and bring them to maturity, and gather them into his barns without watchful and patient toil that braves all weather? Would his fields be so cultivated and his crops so raised and stored if he sat still and did nothing, improved neither sunshine nor shower? And is it easier, think you, to cultivate, and grow in, the graces and virtues and excellencies of the Christian character?

Will a man become kind and generous, pure in heart, and poor in spirit—will he become stronger in the root virtue of faith, and in love, humility, patience, which spring out of it—will he become meek, gentle, self-emptied, self-subjugated, master of his tongue, master of his temper, master of his passions—will he become spiritually minded—will he become all this and more,

without difficulty, without resolution and struggle and prayer?

No, my Brethren, if you are saved finally it will be "scarcely," not without difficulty. You will have, as the sailors had with the boat, "much work to come by it." Heaven will not be reached—the prize of the high calling will not be won by a do-nothing religion, or by taking things easy. The righteous man is saved, and shall be saved—he shall enter into heaven; but, then, it will be as the racer, who reaches the winning-post, by straining every nerve and power of his body:—it will be as the wrestler, covered with the dust and sweat, and panting with the effort of a severe and long-continued struggle:—it will be as the warrior, bearing on his body the wounds and the scars of a sorely contested fight, which

often seemed of doubtful issue, and in which he was victorious, but only after a struggle which had wellnigh exhausted his strength: —it will be as one who has "striven" hard, yea, "agonised" to gain his object, and who has in his appearance and dress, so to speak, the marks, and the evidences of the pushing, the pressing, and the persistent effort put forth.

Oh, my Hearers, we must "labour to enter into that rest!" Heaven is not to be gained without labour. It *may* be gained, but then, with difficulty; the righteous man is saved, but then "scarcely," *i.e.* only by striving against the evil, and the sin, and temptations that are within him and without him—only by making it his business and his battle to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to cultivate, at

whatever cost to the carnal and corrupt nature, the graces and virtues of the Christian character, those graces and virtues, those holy beauties which stood out so perfectly and brilliantly in the human character of our Lord.

My Brethren, are you bearing this in mind? You hope to be saved at "that day;" are you striving to be saved? If saved, it will be "scarcely," like the sailors to get the boat, "with much work." Is there such work in your case? Are you working out your salvation? Are you making a business of your salvation? Does it keep you busy? Can you be called in regard to it with any propriety a racer, a wrestler, a warrior, a striver? With the exception of infants and imbeciles, there is not a sinner in heaven of whom it cannot

be said "that he was scarcely saved,"—saved, but with effort; saved, but with struggle; saved, but with resolving, trying, watching, and praying. Oh! let us not deceive ourselves! if saved at all it will be "scarcely," with difficulty, the difficulty of conflict and toil, and patience and faith.

Such then is the thing here supposed or asserted. We come now to

II. The startling question founded on it: "Where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?"

The "ungodly" and the "sinner" are persons who in point of character are the opposite of the righteous.

Consider for a moment who these are, that we may feel the force of the startling question here asked concerning them. There is a plain and important distinction between them.

The "ungodly" are they who have no fear of God about them, no regard to God and His authority in what they are and do. It is worthy your serious consideration that the question of the text concerns the "ungodly" as well as the "sinner." The charge brought against this class, conveyed in the word ungodly, by which they are described, is not that they are guilty of gross and open and scandalous sin. It is not that they are drunkards or dishonest, or dishonourable, or unclean, or profane swearers, or profligate in their habits; it is not that they are not kind, courteous, amiable;—it is not that there is nothing good and commendable about them, and worthy of imitation;—it is not that they are not, in many respects, good neighbours and members of society. No! They may

be all that. But the charge against them is that they are "ungodly"—they live without God—without any regard to His authority and glory. They know Him not, and are at no pains to acquire the knowledge of Him as revealed in His word. He made them, sustains them day by day; He sent His Son to die for and redeem them. All that is good and desirable in their lot is His gift. Yet they live without Him, without any thought of Him, without any loving affection for Him, without any sense of obligation to Him, and without any desire to please Him. Even their very virtues,—virtues which make them useful members of society, and which win for them esteem and affection, exist irrespectively of Him. They have excellencies, but they are godless excellencies. The sphere of

their goodness is a sphere into which God never enters. If they are amiable, it is with an amiability that loves and thinks of all but Him. If they have self-devotion, it is a self-devotion that never surrendered one gratification for His sake. If they have indomitable energy, it is an indomitable energy that never wrought one persevering work for Him. If they have kindness, gratitude, and love, it is a kindness, gratitude, and love that embrace all but Him. In this lies the universal depravity of man. When, in the Bible, men are said to be depraved and corrupted, and that radically and wholly, and universally, it is not meant that they are all marked by gross and debasing vices; or that there is in none of them anything noble, excellent, and generous. No! the charge which it brings

against all men, and all men alike, is, that prior to conversion they are "ungodly." It is ungodliness that is charged against them—alienation from God—not thinking of Him—not rendering to Him fear, gratitude, love, praise;—it is not that the worst and most degraded among them, but that the best and loftiest natures are banded in this conspiracy to exile Him from the world He has made. It is this ungodliness that the Bible charges, and charges on all alike, and instead of being a small sin, it lies at the root, and constitutes the essence of every sin. Many think that if they keep free from immoralities, and are kind and honest and honourable, that it is well with them. They make no account of ungodliness—of living without God, without thinking of Him, without loving Him, without regarding Him in

anything they are or do. And yet it is the parent sin of all, and a sin that will without fail exclude from heaven. For what says the text? "Where shall the ungodly appear?" If the righteous man, the man who is reconciled to God, who loves Him, whose supreme desire is to please Him—if this man, who is in the strictest sense "godly"—if he is "scarcely" saved, where shall the "ungodly," the man who is the opposite of all this, in whose thoughts and heart and conscience and daily life God is not—whose very virtues are godless virtues —where shall he appear? If the righteous man is "scarcely saved," saved only with difficulty, only after prayer and effort and pains to please God, and to have his heart and mind and life and character conformed to God's will—oh! where shall the "un-

godly" appear, from whose thoughts and affections and daily business God is banished, and by whom He is forgotten—where shall he appear? What place and society in the coming world is he fitted for?

Consider now for a moment who the "sinner" is. By the "sinner" we understand those who are not only "ungodly" but "wicked," who are living in manifest sin; in disregard not only of the first, but second table of the law. Of course every ungodly person is a sinner, and every sinner ungodly. But when the two are named together, the language in each indicates the prominent characteristic. The ungodly is characterised not by gross and open sin but by forgetfulness or disregard of God. The sinner, on the other hand, is characterised by his wickedness, by sin which all

admit to be sin. The dishonest and fraudulent is such a sinner, the drunken and untruthful, the unclean and the covetous, the profane and the profligate, the sensualist and the scoffer. Each of these, and of suchlike, is the "sinner" of the text. In short, the "sinner" is one who is not only God-forgetting, but sin-loving and doing.

Such are the persons here mentioned. They embrace every one unregenerate, unholy, unchanged by grace in heart and character.

Now mark the startling question respecting them: "Where shall they appear? Where shall they stand and find a place at that day?"

You will observe that it is assumed that you *are* to appear on that day. And the question is, *Where?* Though among the

ungodly and the sinners, you are to appear at the bar of judgment as well as others. There is no uncertainty whatever in regard to that. Godly and ungodly, saint and sinner, must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ. There can be no question as to that. The question is not as to the fact of your appearing, but as to the "where." Where are you to appear? Is it on the right hand or on the left?

I know where the righteous is to appear. He shall appear on the right hand of the Judge. He shall be saved on "that day," though it be "scarcely," though with difficulty, though only after working and striving and fighting the good fight of faith, in order that he may overcome all that is sinful and selfish in his nature, and attain to the graces and virtues and holy excel-

lencies of Christian character. I know where he is to appear. The text tells me that, in saying that he is "saved" though "scarcely." But "where" are you to appear? You are among the sinners and the ungodly. Like them you are making no effort to attain salvation, to be reconciled to God, to please and to be like Him, to do His will and be meetened for His presence. If the righteous appear at His right hand, but only after great effort and anxiety, where are you to appear who are making no effort and have no anxiety whatever? Do the path of the righteous, and the path of the sinner and the ungodly have the same happy termination? Can you fancy that? Can the east and west ever meet and coincide? Do the broad and narrow way lead to the same heavenly home? If the

righteous find it hard to reach heaven, will the sinner and ungodly find it easy, so easy as to require no effort on his part,—neither pains nor prayer?

Again I ask, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" You are to appear somewhere; I pray you consider where. You are in your ungodliness and sin pursuing a certain path: I pray you consider where it ends or leads to. I can tell you where the path along which the righteous is journeying leads to. It is a hard and toilsome and painful one, but it leads him on to glory, honour, and immortality. You are pursuing the very opposite path; you have clean turned your back on the path on which he is journeying, and are going in exactly the contrary direction. I pray you consider

where it leads to. It may be to you smooth and easy and pleasant. I pray you to consider if it be not too smooth and easy and pleasant and enticing to be safe. It has been said that there is a peculiar fascination in the movement of a boat which is gliding softly and swiftly down the rapids above the falls of Niagara. But a man must be strangely constituted to be able, under such circumstances, so to abandon himself to the sense of present satisfaction, as to forget the fate that is immediately before him, as not to look to the fearful and appalling end to which he is being so softly and swiftly carried. My Hearers, your path may be smooth and pleasant, but is it safe? Is there no "scarcely" in it, no difficulty to be overcome? No effort necessary ere you can make progress in it? If not, let that alarm

you and arrest your steps. It is not the road—a path that leads to heaven. For in the road that leads to heaven there is the "scarcely," the difficulty, the toil, the running, the wrestling, the striving. Where, then, are you to appear if you pursue your present course to its close? Where is its close? It has a close, a termination somewhere. I ask, where? Can you answer that question? Have you thought of it? Oh, my Hearers, can it be true of you that you are pursuing a course, and have never yet asked yourself the question, Where does it lead to—where is it to end?

Again I ask, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" I do not say where; the text does not say where. Peter could have told you, but he does not here at least. He

simply asks, "where?" and leaves you to consider the "where." You are to appear somewhere on "that day;" where, my Hearer, oh! where is it? You cannot suppose that in your present course you are going nowhere. You are not journeying to nonentity. You cannot suppose that you are going anywhere as chance may direct. No! You are going to a fixed and definite destination—as fixed and definite as that to which the righteous is going. Where is it? I pray you consider that. The "where" the apostle does not mention. He draws a curtain before it, and hides it from the view. Oh, the "where," the unknown and fearful where, that lies behind that curtain. What a mystery of woe there is in it! I shall not say where you shall appear. But this I may do; I may say where you shall not

appear, if you pursue the path of ungodliness and sin to the end. You will not appear at the right hand of the Judge. You will not appear in heaven. You will appear somewhere, but not there. When you open your eyes in eternity it will not be there. No one need look for you there—no one will find you there. Your father, your mother, your son, your daughter, your friend may be there, but they will not find youthere, let them search ever so long.

Young man! where are you to appear? You are journeying to some place, and will by-and-by arrive at it. Where, let me ask, is it? Do not, I pray, pursue a path day after day, without considering where it leads to.

Old man! whatever be the road by which you journey, you are near your journey's

end. Your grey hairs and failing strength warn you that the end is near. I ask you where is that end? When your journey is over, where are you to appear?

We all expect to appear in heaven. Well! I hope our expectation will be realised. But forget not this; the "ungodly" and "sinner" will not appear there. Their path, wherever it leads to, does not lead to heaven. My Hearer, if you then would reach heaven, I pray you avoid their path. Go anywhere you like, but don't follow them. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

II.

JESUS ONLY.

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PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF SYNOD, MAY 1879.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.—MATT. xvii. 8.

And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. —LUKE ix. 36.

THE transfiguration is past, the three disciples, Peter and James and John, lift up their eyes and see no man save Jesus only, and see Him too, as He was before He was transfigured, in the humble form of Jesus of Nazareth, about to die the death of which He had just told in the preceding chapter. Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and talked with Him of the decease He should accomplish at Jerusalem,

have departed; their work in coming to Him is done, they have borne their testimony to Him and His atoning death, and now they leave Him alone, intimating thereby that it is not to them, eminent and representative men of God though they were, but to Him, and Him alone, as the Crucified One, that we are to look; that He is the one and exclusive object on which our gaze, our faith and hope and confidence as sinners are to rest; that no man, and no class of men, however holy and useful and honourable, are to come between us and Him; that we are to lift up our eyes and to see no man "save Jesus only."

All the visible glories of the scene too have vanished. The bright cloud is gone. His face no longer shines as the sun. His raiment is no longer white and glistering.

Nothing of all the transcendent glory remains but Himself simply as Jesus about to be crucified, telling us thereby that it is not anything external to Christ, any visible glory that may surround Him, even such as now surrounds Him in heaven, but Christ Himself, the God-man, the Crucified, whose death was accomplished at Jerusalem, that is to be the object of our contemplation and confidence; all else is to disappear in His presence; all else, however glorious, is of importance only as it attracts attention to Him; and all else has served its purpose, when He stands alone and we see Him only.

In Luke, the words recording the incident are, "Jesus was found alone." In Matthew the words are, "They saw no man, save Jesus only."

The words of Luke bring before us a great and notable fact—that Jesus stands alone, alone in Scripture, as He concerning whom it all testifies, to whom its promises, predictions, types, histories, doctrines, all point, and from whom they all derive their significance and importance. The words of Matthew, "They saw no man, save Jesus only," bring before us a great and notable duty—that as sinners, or in the matter of our salvation, we are to see Him only—we are to allow nothing and nobody to come between us and Him, nothing and nobody to obscure and interrupt our vision of Him; no man, however great and worthy, not even Moses and Elias; and no object, however excellent and glorious in itself, no, not even the glory of heaven. We are to see "Jesus only." All divine revelation, all

dispensations of providence, all circumstances and events in our lot, all are designed to bring us to this point, and to this point we should come, "to lift up our eyes and see no man, save Jesus only"—Jesus whose decease was accomplished at Jerusalem.

My object in what follows is to mention some of the events, or occasions, or periods in our spiritual history in which we are "to see nothing and nobody, save Jesus only." I shall confine myself to these:—We are to see nothing and nobody, save Jesus only, in the matter of our *pardon*, or personal acceptance with God—in the work of our *sanctification* or personal holiness—under the pressure of *affliction* or trial—in the presence of *death*, and at the *bar of judgment*.

I. We are to see no man, nothing and nobody, save Jesus only, in the matter of our pardon and personal acceptance with God. In this Jesus "is found alone," and we are to lift up our eyes and to see "Jesus only."

As sinners, we can be pardoned, justified before God—that is, freed from the curse and doom of sin, which we deserve and have incurred, and can be made heirs of heaven and its eternal life, solely and exclusively on the ground of Christ's Righteousness, or of His active and passive obedience as it is called—in other words, of His "obedience unto death," by which He has made a true and proper and perfect atonement for sin. On no other ground is pardon possible to the guilty, and salvation to the lost.

The reason is obvious. The penalty or

curse threatened by the law must be borne ere the transgressor can be forgiven; and the obedience demanded by the law must be rendered ere we can inherit the life, the eternal life, which it promises. Though "rich in mercy," God cannot in His dealings with us disregard the claims of His law against us, that holy, and just, and good law by which His moral government is carried on. If we are to be pardoned, its penalty must be borne; if we are to be made heirs of heaven, the obedience which it demands as the condition must be rendered. And Christ has done this for us, because we could not do it for ourselves. He became obedient unto death, and thereby fulfilled all the righteousness of the law, performed all its requirements, and endured the whole weight of its penalty; and on the

ground of His work, God, though the Holy Moral Governor, the Author and Guardian of the law, is alike honourably able, and cordially willing, to receive back into His favour any and every sinner on the earth, and to treat him as if he had never sinned at all.

Now what I wish to be noted is, that on first coming to Him for pardon and acceptance, and in coming to Him at any subsequent period for renewed pardon, we are to see "Jesus only" and His decease, nothing and nobody save Jesus only—no work but His, no righteousness but His, no merit but His, no priesthood, no sacrifice but His,—in short, no man and no object, "save Jesus only." It is only on the ground of what He is and has done, that any sin can be pardoned, any sinner accepted.

How often does it happen when one is awakened to a sense of sin, and is asking the momentous question—the most momentous question a man can ask,—"What must I do to be saved?" that instead of looking to Jesus whose decease was accomplished at Jerusalem, and "seeing no man, save Jesus only," he looks to himself also. He thinks that he must be and do something to commend himself to God—that he must make himself a better and a holier man ere he can hope for pardon and acceptance. "I fear I am not good enough," said a dying man to me on one occasion. He was looking in the direction of his own goodness, as if in it he was to find something of the ground of his acceptance—something of the effectual plea he was to urge before God. This it is that keeps

many a one at a distance from God and peace. They do not, as did the disciples, see "no man, save Jesus only." They see themselves too, and themselves more than Jesus. Let us beware of this. Look away from your own doings altogether. They have and can have no influence whatever in the matter of your pardon and acceptance, and that though they were ten thousand times better than they are. You and every sinner on earth may be pardoned and accepted, but then it can be only on the ground of a work that not partially but perfectly meets all the claims of God's law against you as a guilty transgressor. These claims you personally cannot meet. Can you bear and exhaust the penalty of the law? Can you give the spotless obedience which it requires? You cannot. No pardon,

no acceptance, no heaven without a perfect righteousness; and that you cannot render. In short, you can do nothing, absolutely nothing, on the ground of which, either in whole or in part, God would be justified in justifying you. Your best works, the best tears that ever streamed from your eyes, the best repentance that ever rent your heart as well as your garments, the best prayers you ever uttered, the best deeds of benevolence and kindness you ever did, the best reformation of life and character you ever attempted or attained, can furnish no ground, no shadow of a ground, on which God can pardon and receive you. They are of no use whatever as regards this. They cannot cancel even one sin, cannot wash out even one guilty spot from your conscience. They can in no way and in no degree cleanse or

pacify it. Nothing you can do can have the effect: it is in vain to try. "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee very much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord;"—a verse which old Quarles has quaintly and forcibly paraphrased:—

"There's not a blot
Will stir a jot,
There is no hope
In fuller's soap,
Tho' I add nitre too.
I many ways have tried,
Have often soaked it with cold fears.
And when a time I spied,
I poured upon it scalding tears;
Have rinsed and rubbed
And scraped and scrubbed,
And turned it up and down,
Yet can I not
Wash out the spot,
'Tis rather fouler grown."

Yes, in spite of all we can do, the guilty

stain is still there; the sin still remains unpardoned sin.

There is no use in looking to yourself or to anything you can do. And there is no need. You are not asked to do what is necessary as the ground of pardon and acceptance. Jesus has done that for you long, long ago, and done it perfectly. He said, "It is finished," ere He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. "His blood cleanseth from all sin." Look to Him therefore, and to Him alone. Turn away from yourself, your own resources, your own strength, and your own doings, and concentrate all your attention and all your confidence on Him and His accomplished decease.

II. We are to see nothing and nobody, save Jesus only, in the work of our sanctification or personal holiness.

The ultimate design or end contemplated by God in the gift and atoning death of Christ is our holiness. It is to make us like Himself in the moral excellencies, the holy beauties of His character; it is "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." It is not simply to provide means by which we may be pardoned, or delivered from wrath and from hell. It is something higher, something to which pardon itself is but a means, even our sanctification or personal holiness.

In our natural state we dislike God. He is to us an object of dread, dislike, and distrust. His holy law is our aversion. We are not subject to it. We are enemies to Him in our minds and by wicked works. This is our character, and the character

of our whole race by nature. We are "children of disobedience" as well as "children of wrath."

Now, God's chief design in the mission and death of Jesus is to morally change us —to remove our enmity and distrust, and to replace them by love and confidence— to remove our aversion to His law, and replace it by delight and submission—to transform us from "children of disobedience" into "obedient children,"—in short, to make us like Himself, partakers not only of the Divine forgiveness, but also and specially of the Divine nature. Not pardon simply but holiness, all that is implied in His command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" —not deliverance from the curse and condemnation of the law, simply, but the re-establishing of that law in its ascendency

over us, over our thoughts, feelings, will, and conscience,—this forms the very end—is the great terminating design of God in the Gospel. "Salvation is not *of* works, but it is *to* works. If it do not begin with works, it ends with them; or rather I should say, it does not begin from works, but no sooner does it exist, even in its most embryo form, than there commences a stirring and a working and a busy movement away from sin and towards holiness and righteousness."[1] This is God's chief end and aim in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

The means which He employs to gain this end—the only means that can gain it, is the exhibition He has given of Himself in Christ Jesus, the Crucified. He has in

[1] Chalmers.

Christ Jesus revealed Himself in His true character, in all His matchless excellencies as the "Just God and the Saviour." He there shows us how completely, by reason of our guilt and depravity, we have mistaken His character—that in dreading, distrusting, and disliking Him, we dread, dislike, and distrust our best and truest Friend, One who has no ill-will, but infinite good-will toward us. How loving and compassionate, and how holy and just as well, must that God be, "who gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"! In the Wondrous Sufferer in Gethsemane and on Calvary, God is set forth in all the attractive loveliness and glory of His character. He there appears—to use the words, I believe, of the great M'Laurin—"full-

orbed in the complete round of His perfection."

Now what I wish to note is, that it is the perception of this glory, "the glory of God in the face of Christ," as the apostle terms it, that changes and regenerates the heart, and makes the sinner holy. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The heart is arrested and captivated by it and assimilated to it.

The process by which this is brought about is simple. The view of this redeeming love in Christ awakens our love to Him. And the effect of our love to Him when awakened is, that in proportion to its strength our likings and dislikings are changed; we love what He loves, hate what

He hates, seek habitually to please Him, and aspire habitually to be like Him. The sight of His character as revealed in Christ revolutionises ours, makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus.

And thus it is that "Christ Jesus and Him crucified," and He alone, is our sanctification. He is made unto us not only righteousness, but sanctification. It is what we see in Him and His accomplished decease, and it alone, that regenerates and sanctifies. Nothing else can. The Holy Spirit works in our sanctification. He is the Sanctifier. But it is only by "revealing Christ in us," or enabling us to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, that He sanctifies. The Gospel is the instrument employed in our sanctification, but then it is simply by what it tells us of Christ that it is effectual for

this end. Even daily providence has to do with our sanctification, but then it is simply as it suggests to us thoughts of Christ.

Christ is alone in the beginning of our sanctification, and Christ is alone in its progress and perfection. No human heart has ever been or ever will be thus changed apart from Christ and His cross. No regeneration, no holiness, no mortifying of sin, no growth in Christian excellence apart from Christ and His cross. You will never truly know what sin is, and never hate and overcome it so as no more to be ruled by it, and you will never know what holiness is, and will never love and attain to it, apart from Christ and His cross. You may be highly educated, distinguished by learning and culture, you may seek and

intermeddle with all human wisdom, but all that will not make you good and holy, will not raise you to what is the highest style of man—likeness to God, apart from Christ and His cross.

Fathers and Brethren, would we be personally holy, would we personally attain to and grow in the virtues and graces, the gentleness, patience, meekness, benevolence, purity, love to God, submission to His will, heavenliness of mind, tenderness of conscience—would we grow in these and the other graces and virtues which constitute holiness, then let us lift up our eyes, let us see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." Let Him fill the whole horizon of our vision, let us concentrate on Himself our thoughts, our affections, our aspirations, our hopes; for we naturally take the likeness of the

glories we contemplate, and are attracted to the perfections we adore: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

III. We are to see Jesus only in the day or under the pressure of affliction or trial.

As God's people we must lay our account with trial or affliction in some form or other, either of outward trouble or of inward conflict. The disciples suffered, suffered because they were disciples, and suffered, too, the ills common to other men. And so do all Christian disciples still.

Now my remark is that, in the day or under the pressure of trial, we are, if we would be supported and comforted and profited, to lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." I mean that

we are to look upon our trial, whatever its nature be, as coming from His hand. There may be secondary causes in the production of it. There may be our own folly and sin, there may be the folly and sin of other persons, for He can make use of even human folly and sin to work out His gracious purposes; but in every case we are to look upon the trial or affliction as sent by Him. He is Jesus the Crucified, and, because Jesus the Crucified, He is head over all things, ruling and overruling. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess." That same Jesus whose decease was accom-

plished at Jerusalem, and because of it, now reigns in providence; and providence in its various events and dispensations, whether prosperous or adverse, and in the most painful and perplexing and mysterious of them, is but the expression of His will. "The thing that befalls us and grieves us is of the Lord," and but for His appointment and permission would not have been. The arrow that has pierced us was shot from His bow. "Shall there be evil in the city," evil in our lot, "and the Lord hath not done it?"

This being so, what I say is, that under the pressure of trial we should bear it in mind, and lift up our eyes and see in what we suffer "Jesus only." Everything connected with it should lead our thoughts to Him. It is He that sends it, it is He that

speaks in it, it is He that works by it, it is the purpose of His will it is designed to accomplish, and therefore it is His hand, above and beyond all others, we are to see in it. And it is only by believing this and remembering it, it is only by seeing in the trial nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only," that we can be reconciled to it, sustained under it, or improved by it. For you are assured of this, that being from Him, it is what infinite wisdom appoints and infinite love approves. You can say, it must be right, it must be needful, it must be kindness, else He would not have done it.

I beg of you to think of this. Lift up your eyes in your affliction away from all secondary causes, from all that man has had to do with it, and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." For what else can com-

fort and guide you in the season of sorrow and sufferings? What can philosophy do? What can mere reason do? What can the kind offices of sympathising friends do? What can change of scene or occupation do? What can any or all these things do apart from Christ and His decease? They may for a little divert the mind from the earthly cause of our sorrow, and produce a temporary oblivion of it. But can they bring comfort? Can they beget cheerful acquiescence? Can they awaken joy in our tribulation? They cannot. But what they cannot do, the sight of Jesus can. When I lift up mine eyes away from all that is secondary and human, and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only," I see that all is right; that there is no mistake or unkindness in what has befallen me. In that

Wondrous Sufferer in Gethsemane and on Calvary, and in Him, as the King who in virtue of His sufferings now rules over all, I see reason for submission, acquiescence, thankfulness, and joy. It was a fine remark of the late Professor Sir James Simpson on his deathbed. He said to a friend: "The passage in your last book about the world being made and governed by the hands that were nailed to the cross has brought me much strength and comfort. It has stuck to me ever since I read it." Oh, in the day of trouble let that fact stick to us. But—

IV. We are to see "Jesus only" in the presence of death.

We are all of us soon to die, and some of us are very near death.

Since our last meeting of Synod our

revered Father and Friend, Principal Harper, has been taken from us. He was a fine specimen of the old Christian gentleman—kind, courteous, charitable. No one ever heard the name of Principal Harper associated with anything unworthy or mean or unmanly. I refer to him now simply to state that his old age seemed to me singularly cheerful and happy. I spent one evening with him only a few weeks ago in the house of one of his family, and he was as lively and lightsome as the youngest there. Oh, there is something beautiful and impressive, and confirmatory of one's faith, in seeing an aged Christian, especially an aged Christian minister, happy,—happy that he must shortly put off his tabernacle, happy in the prospect of doing so! And yet it is not wonderful that it should be

thus, when, as in his case, he sees nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only."

Fathers and Brethren, it is not likely that we shall all see another meeting of Synod. This is the last to some of us. I need scarcely say that to die in safety and peace we must in our dying hour see "Jesus only," whose decease was accomplished at Jerusalem. Our guilt must be cancelled ere we can die in safety, and we must have good reason to know that it is cancelled ere we can die in peace—peace that is true and abiding. But nothing can cancel it save the atoning blood of Jesus; nothing can furnish ground on which it can be forgiven, but the decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem. In our dying hour, therefore, we must lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." In Him only

can we be accepted. "Jesus died for me," is the only plea that will help us then, the only thing that can disarm death of its sting and its terrors. Not anything that we are or have done—not our faith, though we may have been for a whole lifetime believers; but the object of our faith, "Jesus only," and His decease.

We may have been blameless in life and consistent in our Christian profession. But that is nothing as a ground of acceptance. The object to which we are then to look is not the blameless life or consistent Christian profession, but "Jesus only" and His decease.

We may have been eminently useful in our day and generation; devoted servants of Christ, unwearied and abundant in our labours. But that is nothing as a ground

of acceptance. The object to which we are then to look is not ourselves but Christ, not what we have done for Him, but what He has done for us. We are to lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only."

Nay, though we should suffer for Christ, take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, and give our bodies to be burned, though we should have our place among martyrs and confessors, and those of whom the world is not worthy, all this would be nothing as a ground of acceptance. The object to which we are then to look is not our sufferings or sacrifices for Christ, but His for us. We are to lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." Can our sufferings or sacrifices or services for Christ atone for our sin? Can they meet the

claims of the law against us, or be a ground on which God can deliver from the hell where we deserve to be, or earn for us a title to the heaven where we deserve not to be? What are they worth as an atonement? They are worth nothing, absolutely nothing, though they were ten thousandfold more meritorious than they are. Our best and fairest righteousness is in this light but filthy rags. Oh, Fathers and Brethren, in the hour and power of death let us look away from it, banish the very thought of it, and lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, save "Jesus only." "I protest," said John Knox on his death-bed to a person reminding him of his great services and sufferings for Christ, "I protest I rely wholly on the free mercy of God manifested to mankind through His dear

Son Jesus Christ, whom alone I embrace for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." I cannot forget the tone of a remark which our old friend, the late Dr. Johnston of Nicolson Street, made to me a few weeks before his death. I happened to refer to the circumstance that in advanced age our past ministry, when we look back on it, often seems to us a failure, altogether unworthy and fruitless, and we appear to ourselves to have lived in vain, which not seldom induces a desponding feeling. He said, "I feel that sometimes, and were it not for 'the blood of sprinkling' I would despair." Fathers and Brethren, however eminent the services we have rendered to the Master, the best of us here, in our last moments, might well despair but for "the blood of sprinkling." No good hope for us

then, no availing plea before God, but in the blood of sprinkling. At that solemn crisis, near to us all, so very near to some of us, let us look away from ourselves and from all that is ours, and lift up our eyes and see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only" and His decease. That is all, that is enough for safety and peace. We need nothing more.

An eminent physician in his last illness said to a relative, "Come back and stay all night. I do not think I shall be long here, and I should like you to remain to the end. From extreme pain I have not been able to think much to-day, but when I do think, it is of the words 'Jesus only,' and really that is all that is needed, is it not, 'Jesus only'?"

It is, Fathers and Brethren, all that is needed. But oh! it is needed. A dark

and "frightful solitude will the valley of the shadow of death be without Jesus only."[1] Happy, thrice happy, if here it shall be with us as Mark speaks: "Suddenly when they had looked round about they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

When I draw my fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
When I stand before Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

V. We are to see "Jesus only," at the bar of final judgment.

Accepted in Him now, it is to Him only we are to look then.

"We must all appear at the judgment-

[1] Charles Brown.

seat of Christ." That is perfectly certain. Let no man shut his eyes to that fact, or treat it as if it were not a fact.

When at His bar, we and all men shall in one sense see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only." He is Judge; and whether we be saved or not, we may rest assured that He and our relation to Him will, even amid all the stupendous magnificence of the surrounding scene, command our undivided attention and interest on that day. We will have no room in our thoughts for any other object, no leisure for the discursive eye; all else will fade from our sight, and we will see no man, "save Jesus only." Happy they who then see Him as their Redeemer as well as their Judge.

We are told that when His redeemed appear before Him "at that day," it will be

with confidence or boldness. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." And why? Is it that now, at His bar, they are perfectly holy? that even Christ can now see in them no moral defect? Certainly He will then see none; and, consciously pure and perfect, their self-respect will be restored.

But that is not the ground of their confidence. No; it lies in the Judge Himself. They see nothing and nobody, "save Jesus only;" but then, they see Him as the Mighty Saviour to whom they are united, with whom they are one, and in whose Righteousness they now appear at His bar. Through His perfect Righteousness put upon them, they know and feel that they are right with the law as regards both penalty and precept, even when He, the Just and Omniscient

Judge, is judging them by it. They see Him only, and as they gaze on Him in His glory, on His judgment throne, they know that they have nothing to fear, seeing that His Righteousness is their righteousness, His merit their merit, His kingdom their kingdom. Our confidence, our hope, and our joy on that day is the same as before, "Jesus only," and His decease.

"Jesus, thy robe of Righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in this arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand on that great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Then this shall be my only plea,
'Jesus hath lived, and died for me.'"

In closing, let me press these two things:—

1. The chief design of the Christian ministry. It is to bring men into a state of reconciliation to God,—a state of peace and friendship

with Him; it is to make them holy,—God-like in all that they are and do, "followers (or imitators) of Him as dear children;" it is to support, and comfort, and guide them for the coming death and the judgment that follows it. This is the work which the Gospel ministry is designed by God, and under God, to accomplish—this is the special work to which, as Gospel ministers, we are called, to which we are bound to give ourselves wholly, and from the faithful doing of which we are to allow no other work, however lawful and important in itself, to divert our thoughts and energies. Next to our own personal salvation, this is the one thing we have to do. Our business is not to teach men the truths of science or of philosophy, or of any branch of mere human learning, but the truth as it is in Jesus; it

is not to entertain men, amuse or please them, but to convert them to God, to bring them, and that more and more, to know and love, and trust and honour and serve Him, and to prepare themselves to meet Him at death and judgment. This is the special work given us to do, and to which we are to make everything else we do subordinate and subservient; and we are faithful, only as we try to do it, and successful, only as we succeed in doing it. That is our work.

2. My second remark is, that we can in no degree accomplish that work, except by setting forth in our ministry "Jesus only" and His decease. The apostle says to the Corinthians that he "determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" not simply Jesus Christ as a teacher, or as an example, or as

a model of self-sacrifice (to use a favourite phrase of a certain school), or as a new starting-point in the development of the human race, but as crucified, as dying in our room, and thereby making atonement for our sin. In order to be saved himself he saw "Jesus only" and "His decease," and in order that others might be saved he persuaded them too to see "Jesus only" and His decease.

Fathers and Brethren, we must do likewise if we "would both save ourselves and them that hear us." It is only by the knowledge and faith about "Jesus only" and His decease that men can be brought into a state of pardon and acceptance with God, that they can be regenerated and made holy, Christ-like in life and Christ-like in character, that they can be supported and profited amidst the sorrows and trials they have to encounter,

that they can die safely, peacefully, hopefully, and have confidence even at the final judgment. If therefore we fail to set before them Jesus and His atoning death, our ministry must of necessity be a failure, total and complete, as regards the chief design for which the Gospel ministry has been appointed. We, as far as our ministry is concerned, leave men to perish by withholding, and by putting something else in the place of, that which alone can save them. There is much said in our day of the necessity of progress in religious truth as in other kinds of truth, meaning thereby, not simply the necessity of advancing in our knowledge of the Gospel, but of modifying and improving it, and adapting it to the supposed new needs of the age in which we live. "Men have outgrown their need of 'Jesus only and

His decease'—what was suited to them in primitive times is not suited to them now, in these modern times." In regard to those who hold and teach and act on this view I might ask, Is the design contemplated by God in the Gospel more fully accomplished in them than in others? Are they more holy? Are what is called their advanced views accompanied by a corresponding advance in moral excellence? Are they more pure, more meek, more humble, more loving, more unselfish, more obedient, more God-like, more active in Christian work?

But then I would ask further: With all our knowledge and culture, have we really outgrown our need of the old Gospel concerning Christ and Him crucified? Have we not the same needs as they had to whom the apostles preached and wrote?

Are we not as truly guilty, condemned, depraved, weak, mortal, and accountable? And is not that which was the only thing that could meet their case then, the only thing that can meet ours now? If the disease be the same, is not the only remedy which could heal it then, the only remedy that can heal it now? Has it lost any of its efficacy so that it is less adapted to man's fallen condition now than in olden times? Is not that which saved Paul and Peter, and James and John, and the greatest sinners to whom they preached, and which made them what they became in holy attainment and loving labour for Christ, enough for us? Will anything else make us and men now, what it made them? Oh! the folly and presumption and sin of trying to alter or improve upon that Gospel which

the apostle calls the "power of God and the wisdom of God" to salvation, and the power and the wisdom of which lie in that very thing which some would eliminate from it, or explain away,—"Jesus only" and His decease—Christ and Him crucified. Fathers and Brethren, let us be true to the Gospel of the blessed God—the Gospel of which Christ, dying in the room of the guilty and making atonement for their sin, is the pervading theme—the Gospel of our Fathers in this Church, the Gospel which has hitherto sounded forth from all our pulpits, and which has made our Church what it is, in Christian character and Christian work —that Gospel which alone can bring back the world to Christ. Let us be true to it for Christ's sake, the world's sake, and our own.

III.

THE SINNER'S TEXT.

III.

THE SINNER'S TEXT.

[At the end of this sermon, there is the following unfinished sentence, written in a feeble hand: "This is emphatically a sinner's text. Whatever differences—alike in *this*, that we are sinners—greater sinners than we" . . . Hence the title.]

The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.—1 JOHN i. 7.

IN the preceding part of the verse it is said, "If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,"—God with us and we with God. The reference here is not to the fellowship which we, as Christians, have with each other, but which we have with God, and

God with us. "If we walk in the light," that is, in the light of God's truth and holiness—in that light in which He is,—then we have fellowship with Him and He with us; there is a joint fellowship between us. But it may be said, 'How can I enjoy the comfort, possess the reality of this fellowship, seeing I am a sinner and daily sinning? I am daily coming short of this holy walk, this walk in the light of God's truth and holiness, daily going aside out of the way of it, and walking in the darkness of error and sin. Will not this cut me off from the fellowship with God which is connected with it? Will not my guilt separate between me and Him? And then, how can I continue in this holy walk with the sinful heart I have within me?' To these questions the answer is,

"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin."

True, you commit sin, and deserve to be excluded from this divine fellowship; true, your heart is corrupt and wicked, and prone to stray. But "Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin," from all its guilt and all its pollution. Look to it and you will find in it an antidote to all your fears, what will take away your guilt, purify your heart, and so remove every obstacle in the way of your walking in the light and enjoying the fellowship with God connected with it. Be thy guilt ever so deep, thy heart ever so black, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

Candlish, in his book on John's Epistle, has expressed the connection of the text with the context as follows:—

"'I invite thee,' says God, 'to have fellowship with me; fellowship real and not merely nominal with me and with my Son Jesus Christ; fellowship with us in our plan and purpose of loving mercy, in all its grace and glory; a fellowship in it with us of insight, confidence, partnership, sympathy, joy. If it is to be a real fellowship, it must be a fellowship of light. I cannot modify, I cannot alter the condition of the fellowship any more than I can cease to be what I am—"Light." But I do what is far better. I make provision for the removal of every obstruction which your guilt and corruption might interpose in the way of your walking in the light as I am in the light. I give you the assurance that the blood of Jesus Christ, my Son, cleanseth from all sin.'"

In considering the text I shall call your attention—I. To the import of the statement which it makes; and, II. To the proof and illustration which it furnishes of its truth.

I. To the import of the assertion which it makes. The statement is, that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." What does that mean? And

1*st*, What is meant by the blood of Christ?

It denotes the blood which He shed upon the cross, or the atoning sacrifice which He offered to God when He suffered for sin, the Just One in the room of the unjust; that blood which is said in Colossians to be the great medium of pacification between God and man, which in Ephesians is said to be the means of our redemption, which in Hebrews is said to

"purge the conscience from dead works," which in Peter is called "the precious blood of Christ," in which, it is said in Revelation, the redeemed in glory have washed their robes and made them white, and which in the ordinance of the Supper is said to have been shed for the remission of sins.

You must be careful to observe, however, that the reference here is not to His death or blood-shedding exclusively, as if it alone constituted the whole of His atoning work. All that He did and suffered, from the first moment of His existence on earth up to the last on Calvary, entered as elements into that wherewith the atonement was made, and that as truly and as necessarily as His sufferings or blood-shedding on the cross. All were necessary

to accomplish the end He had in view, to magnify the law and vindicate the character of God in the salvation of the guilty. But then, as His death and blood-shedding on the cross were the last and most important part of His sufferings,—the crowning act, so to speak,—that without which all that went before would have been of none effect, it is by a common figure of speech put as a part for the whole.

By His "blood," then, we are to understand the atoning or propitiatory sacrifice which He offered to God in our stead, and as our High Priest, the "obedience unto death" to which He humbled Himself in order to render the exercise of mercy in the pardon of our sins and the redemption of our souls, consistent with the claims of God's character and love as our holy moral Governor. This

is the primary and main idea which the terms "blood" and "death" of Christ, when used in connection with our sins, are intended to convey,—that of suffering in the sense of making atonement, that of suffering in the room and for the sins of others, or of bearing the penal evils or punishment our sins deserve, in order to furnish ground on which God may consistently and honourably remit them.

This truth is often in our day ignored, and it is now the fashion with many to represent the "blood" or death of Christ as nothing more, and as designed to be nothing more, than an example or pattern to us,—than a sublime moral spectacle or model of self-sacrifice, having no higher end than to influence our feeling and conduct toward God. It is certainly true that

Christ's "blood" or death was all that they say, but it was more. We find no fault with what is taught, we only find fault with the omission of what ought to be taught.

Christ's blood or death was, beyond all question, a sublime moral spectacle and model of self-sacrifice, the sublimest the world ever witnessed; but it was, besides this, and chiefly, an atoning sacrifice, death suffered in the room of others, blood shed to bring forgiveness, a substitute for our personal punishment, the endurance of a curse which we had brought upon ourselves in order that we might be redeemed from it. To deny this is to deny the plainest teaching of the Bible, and practically to set aside its authority. "To a mind that can contrive to its own satisfaction to strip the Bible of the

doctrine of atonement by substitutionary suffering, it might, in my apprehension, be safely pronounced impossible to convey a divine discovery at all, there being no terms conceivable which might not by such a mind be explained away. Salvation is the lesson of the Bible, and it is salvation by atonement or substitutionary suffering."[1]

Such is what is meant by the "blood of Christ." You will observe—

2*d*. What is meant by its cleansing from all sin?

Two views have been taken of the words. The one view is, that the reference is to pardon of sin, or our justification or acceptance before God. According to this view, when it is said that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from sin," the idea is, that

[1] Wardlaw.

through the atoning efficacy of that blood all our sins may be pardoned, or we may be accepted.

The other view is, that the reference is to our sanctification, to our being regenerated or made holy. According to this view, the words, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from sin," mean that the blood of Jesus Christ regenerates our fallen nature, purifies it from the pollution of sin, and will ultimately make us perfect in holiness.

In themselves considered both these views express what is vital and indubitable truth. It is through the blood of Christ that we are pardoned and accepted, that is, it is on the ground of what He did and suffered when He shed His blood as an atoning sacrifice, that these blessings are bestowed.

And it is not less true that it is by the

blood of Christ that we are sanctified or made holy. It is His atoning death that has opened up the way for the descent into our hearts of the Holy Spirit, who is the great agent in our sanctifying, and it is the truth about the blood of Christ as an atoning sacrifice that is the moral means of our sanctification,—that which the Spirit employs in beginning, carrying forward, and finally perfecting the work.

In our text I am disposed to think that the reference is chiefly, though not exclusively, to the former of these views, that which makes the cleansing from sin to denote the pardon of sin. I say not exclusively; for where the one blessing is found, there the other will be found also. They ever go together. They come through the same channel, are attained on our part

by the same act, faith in Christ, and ever exist together in the same soul. Whoever is pardoned is purified. Whoever is justified is sanctified. Whoever undergoes a change as to his legal state or standing before God, undergoes at the same time, and by the same means, a change as to his moral character.

But while this is true, I am disposed to think that pardon of sin is the main idea intended by the words, "cleanseth from sin." "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," that is, through that blood, or on the ground of Christ's atoning sacrifice, all our sins, whatever be their character, may be forgiven, and will be, to him who believes.

In other places of the Bible we are said to be pardoned or saved through or by faith, without any mention being made of the

blood. "A man is justified by faith;" "He that believeth shall be saved." But there is no discrepancy or contradiction between the statements. His blood is the cleansing element: faith is simply that which applies the cleansing element to our own particular case. The blood is the ground on which the blessing is offered: faith is the hand by which it is laid hold of. The blood is the appointed sacrifice which atones for sin, which propitiates God, which pacifies the conscience: faith is that which leads us, believing in God's love and good-will in appointing it, to appropriate it as ours, and to rely on Him who offered it. The "blood" is the remedy which alone can heal the sin-bitten soul: faith is that sin-bitten soul's eager look to it. Faith is nothing without the blood. Its value all depends

on the blood. But the value of the blood does not depend on the faith. Many are saved without the faith, such as infants and imbeciles. But none are saved without the blood. The healing, cleansing, saving efficacy is all in the blood. Let your eye ever be directed to the blood, the flowing blood. When past sins rise up before you and distress your conscience, it is of the blood you should think; it is to the blood you should look; on the blood you should rely. The ground of pardon, the foundation of hope is all without, not anything within us,—not our faith, not our trust; but something wholly without us and independent of us—the blood of Christ. The blood, my Brethren, is the great thing in the Gospel. Even Christ Himself could be nothing to us as a Saviour without the blood. It is the

blood "that cleanseth." It has been finely said, "Christianity is the religion of sinners." It is the only religion suited to sinners, the only religion that meets their case as sinners. But Christ's would not be a religion for sinners without the blood, any more than the religion of nature. On re-reading the life of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, I was much struck with a remark he made on his deathbed, illustrative of this. All his life and during a great part of his illness he had a horror of death.[1]

[1] On one occasion in the summer of the year in which he died, he acknowledged amid a circle of friends, when on a visit to Oxford, with a look of horror, that he was much oppressed with the fear of death. "I am afraid I am one of those who shall be damned." "What do you mean by damned?" said the Principal of the College, with whom he was staying. "Sent to hell, sir, and punished everlastingly."

Before he died he attained to peace, and he attained to it simply by looking to Christ's sacrifice for sin, and seeing in that a full atonement. "'My dear Doctor,' he said to his medical attendant, 'there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.' 'He pressed me,' says that attendant, 'to read Clarke's sermons.' I asked him why he pressed Clarke, an Arian: 'Because,' said he, 'he is fullest on the propitiation.'" Yes, my Brethren, it is the blood, the cross, to which faith ever turns, and where it finds cleansing and peace. It is this that makes Christ precious to the sinner.

It is not the awful mysteriousness of Christ's pre-existent life, it is not either the lowliness of His manger-bed, or the scene of His ministry, or the words which He spake, and which are written for our learning, or the

splendours of His ascended manhood, that sink deepest into the heart. The picture on which faith loves most to dwell is the crucifixion. It is the suffering form of the Son of man which is most welcome and precious to us perishing sinners; for in that form, bruised and pierced, we read God's answer to our deepest sense of need: "in that flowing blood we see blood that cleanses from all sin."

My Hearer, you are a sinner. Sin has left its guilty stain on your soul, a stain deep, and, as far as human means are concerned, indelible. Nothing that man can do or devise can remove it and give peace to the conscience. Nothing that you can do can wash it out, no tears, no sacrifice, no repentance, no prayers, no gifts, no charities. Not one or all of these, and suchlike, can suffice

to procure pardon. "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee very much soap, yet is thine iniquity marked before me." In spite of all your washing and cleansing, the guilty mark is there as deep and clear and indelible as ever.

But what no device of ours can do, the blood of Christ can. It cleanses from sin, it can wash the guilty stain completely out, can purge the conscience. No sooner is it applied by faith than the scarlet and crimson sins become white as the snow and the wool. That blood possesses such atoning efficacy that He who shed it can say to every believing penitent, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Yea, more than all this. It not only cleanses from sin, but "from all sin." Whatever our sins be in number and aggra-

vation, the text asserts o this blood that it can wash them all away. They cannot be so great as to be beyond the reach of its cleansing efficacy. You may have been a vile offender, a very reprobate in sin. You may be ready to say, "I have gone all lengths in wickedness." "Mine iniquities are more than the hairs of my head." Well, be it so. The Spirit saith, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," whatever its character or amount. He whose infinite mind alone estimates the malignity, turpitude, the pollution and ingratitude of all sin, and who alone is capable of measuring the height and depth and breadth and length of it, allows no reserves, no limitations, to be imposed on the all-cleansing efficacy of this blood by the number and greatness of man's trans-

gressions. It is blood that covers the whole ground of his disobedience, and cleanses its foulest stain. "It cleanseth from all sin." "It cleansed," said Charnock, "the most prodigious sin ever committed on earth, the murder of the Son of God. For some of his murderers were pardoned. What sin so great as this? Suppose a man were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, murder all the rest of mankind, destroy the angels, those superlative parts of creation, he would not contract so monstrous a guilt as they did who crucified the Son of God." And if this blood cleansed their sin, what sin can it not cleanse?

Mark, too, the word "cleanseth." It is not "cleansed," but "cleanseth," even at the present moment. Its efficacy is not simply a thing of the past, but also of the

present. It is an ever-present efficacy. We can speak of it not simply in the past, and say it cleansed, but also in the present, and say it "cleanseth." As His body, so His blood, or the efficacy of His sacrifice, was to see, and has seen no corruption. His blood is like the rod of Aaron, always flourishing in the holy of holies before the mercy-seat. Aaron's rod flourished after Aaron's death; the sacrifice of Christ is always fresh and smoking and efficacious before the throne of God. The blood is called a "new and living way," as if it were just now shed, or had been sprinkled upon us as soon as it streamed from his body. In other words, it has the same efficacy now, at this moment, which it had eighteen hundred years ago,—now, as when you were first converted. We are daily

sinning and daily needing cleansing, and daily will it cleanse us till we reach that sinless world where our robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, till we shall need cleansing no more.

"Atoning Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more."

Such then is the explanation of the text, the grand doctrine or proposition of which is,—that the blood or atoning death of Christ affords ground on which all our sins, be they many or few, great or small, may be forgiven; that if we only come to this loving Saviour, in the exercise of faith, He will, by that blood, make us clean every whit.—A familiar truth certainly, but unutterably precious.

Now in what remains of this discourse

I shall bring before you briefly the proof and illustrations of this truth as they are given in the text. And is it not pleasing and heart-assuring to survey afresh the ground you have for trusting that blood and relying on Him who shed it for us? Is it not pleasing and heart-assuring to survey afresh the strength of that ark in which we have sought shelter from the coming deluge of wrath? Is it not pleasing and heart-assuring to survey afresh the security of that foundation on which we are building our hopes for eternity, the worth of that sacrifice on which we rely for pardon, the mightiness to save of that High Priest who offered it, and who is now within the veil pleading its merit on our behalf?

If you were about to embark on a dangerous voyage to a distant shore, would you not

be careful to see that the ship to which you were to commit your life and property was every way seaworthy? If you were about to insure your life, would you not be careful to ascertain that the office in which you intended to insure was a safe one? If you were proposing to invest your money in any trading company or in any business, would you not use all means to satisfy yourself that the investment was good and likely to be successful? Well, you commit your soul to Christ, you look to His atoning blood for your eternal salvation. You trust it, you venture your eternal all upon it. Let us see then that you are trusting to what will keep it safe, to something that will not disappoint you, but which will cleanse and save you.

1. The *first* evidence then furnished by

the text that the blood of Christ can cleanse us from all our sin is, that it is the blood of one in our nature. You will observe that it is called the blood of Jesus. The name Jesus has a special reference to our Lord's humanity. It was given to Him at His birth into our world, and indicates that He is man as well as God, that He is God incarnate—the God-man, Immanuel, God with us, or in our nature.

God cannot pardon sin at the expense of justice. He can pardon only in the way of the law being fulfilled, of that obedience to it being given which it demands, and which we should have given; and of that penal suffering being borne which it threatens, and which we should have borne.

But no one can thus fulfil the law for us except one in our nature. God Himself as

God could not do it, for the Divine nature is not susceptible of suffering. An angel could not do it; for not having the same passions, not being compassed with the same infirmities, not being liable to the same temptations, an angel, even though in union with the Divinity, could not obey as man is required to obey, nor suffer what man is required to suffer. In the nature that sinned must expiation be made and obedience rendered. He that is to take our place and bear our guilt must be our kinsman. To be a redeemer at all he must be our kinsman redeemer, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.

This was shadowed forth under the Jewish economy. When a Jew lost his estate; when his goods or his lands were taken from him by his relentless creditor, or him-

self sold to meet his debts, he that was to buy back his forfeited goods or enslaved person was to be a brother or kinsman. He who was to redeem must be related. This was not merely a law or an ordinance suited to the then state of society, it was intended to foreshadow the necessity of our Lord's incarnation. To make atonement for our sin, He must be our kinsman. And what it was necessary for Him to be, He became. To redeem us, He submitted to a kindred birth, and was "born" as we are, "of a woman," as well as "made under the law." As God alone He could not claim the kinsman's right. Nor could He do so had He humbled Himself only to the angelic nature. One of the family alone can redeem, and therefore one of the family He became. He bound Himself to us by

human ties, and tabernacled on earth in human nature, and in human form.

Now this constitutes the first proof or illustration furnished by the text, to the atoning efficacy of His sacrifice as a ground of pardon. That which is said to cleanse is blood, the blood of Jesus, the blood of our kinsman, the blood of one in our nature. In the nature that failed to obey, perfect obedience has been rendered; in the nature that sinned, the penalty due to sin has been borne and exhausted.

But it is not enough that man suffer and die for us. The blood of a mere man, or any atonement made by him, will not suffice for our pardon, or cleanse us from our sin. A mere human sacrifice, however high the rank of the victim among the children of men, and however great his excellence, is

not an adequate sacrifice. It will not meet our case. Man for man can not atone. Man's best obedience is, all and ever, due on his own account; and even though it were not, it possesses not the worth or value necessary to constitute it a true and adequate atonement. Whence then does Christ's blood derive its atoning efficacy? What gives to His sacrifice in our nature such a worth and importance as to constitute it a true and proper and perfect propitiation for our sin?

The answer to this brings to the consideration of the *second* thing which gives to Christ's blood such an atoning efficacy,—that it cleanses from, or furnishes ground for the pardon of, all sin, and that is—

2. The fact that it is "the blood of God's Son," or an atonement made by God's Son.

This is the second thing that gives cleansing virtue to His blood—the infinite dignity of His person—He is God's Son.

The name "Son of God" applied to our Lord, intimates that He is Divine—of the same nature as His eternal Father—God's Fellow and Equal as well as our kinsman and brother. The appellation is not given to Him figuratively or as a name of office, but to express a relation subsisting eternally in the Godhead.

He whose blood "cleanseth from all sin" is man. But then He is more than man, even "God's Son"—being God, the God-man.

And this fact it is which constitutes His blood "precious blood," blood that "cleanseth from all sin." While He was made under the law, and could suffer its penalty only in

His human nature, yet all that He did and suffered in that nature being the doing and the suffering of Him who is the Son of God, as well as the Son of man, have impressed on them the essential dignity and moral worth of His Divine perfections. His blood has a value properly infinite, because He is the Son of God. What He did and suffered in His human nature was done and suffered while that human nature was in union with His Divine. His human nature never existed apart and by itself. It never for an instant had a separate subsistence. It never, unconnected with Divinity, thought one solitary thought, or did one solitary deed. The "child born" was, when born, at the very moment of its birth, "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God." Had He not possessed human nature and been God

simply, He would have had no blood to shed. Had He possessed nothing more than human nature He might have shed His blood, but He would have shed it in vain. It would have had no sin-cleansing efficacy. There would have been nothing in it to impart value or validity to it as a sacrifice for us. But the human nature was the human nature of the Son of God, and what He did and suffered in it had an infinite value, a worth corresponding to the Divine dignity of His person. He who obeyed the law for us in our nature was the Son of God, a Divine person, and therefore His obedience has all the value of Divinity ; He who suffered the penalty of the law in our nature was the Son of God, a Divine person, and therefore His suffering has all the value of Divinity.

If now this be so, can we doubt the

efficacy of His blood to cleanse from all sin, be the sins many or few, great or small? Shall we doubt the sufficiency of a work done for us, or hesitate to trust in it, when He who did it is the Son of God as well as the Son of man? Shall we hesitate to rely on One for pardon and mercy who has thus, in His own person, as the God-man, to use the words of Hall, "weakness and power, the imperfection incident to a frail and mortal creature and the exemption from these, the attributes of time and those of eternity, elements of being the most opposite, and deduced from opposite worlds, equally combining to give efficacy to His character as Redeemer, and validity to His sacrifice"?

But it may be asked, Had Christ authority to appear on our behalf? His "obedience

unto death" may in its own nature be more than equal to the expiation of our guilt. But is it acceptable to God? Had He His authority to offer Himself as a sacrifice? If destitute of this His blood, however precious, will not avail to cleanse away our sin.

The consideration of this brings us to the *third* thing mentioned in the text which proves and illustrates the atoning efficacy of Christ's blood to cleanse from all sin, and to fulfil His Father's purpose of love—

3. That it is blood shed, or atonement made not only by God's Son, but by God's own appointment. It is the blood, not only of Jesus, but of Jesus "the Christ," God's Son.

The word "Christ" denotes literally the "Anointed," or Appointed one, and intimates that our Lord shed His blood by His Father's

appointment or commandment. The term alludes to a circumstance well known among the Jews. When kings and priests were set apart to their office, they were anointed with oil. In allusion to this, our Lord is called "the Christ," or "the Anointed One," because He was set apart to His office of Mediator and Priest by God Himself, having the Holy Spirit, of which the holy anointing oil was the symbol, conferred on Him in His humanity, to qualify Him abundantly for His work.

However well fitted the blood of Christ may be in its own nature, to atone for our guilt, without God's appointment it would have been of no avail for that purpose. He alone has the power and qualification necessary to affix the penalty to the person of the offender, and He alone has the power

or right of dispensing with it, or commuting it. His appointment therefore, or sanction, is indispensable. But happily for us, the evidence that Christ bears that appointment is full and clear. When He came into our world, He came with His Father's commission, to fulfil the purposes of His Father's love. "He glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He glorified Him who said,—'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.'" On every occasion when on earth, He was careful to let it be known, that He did nothing of Himself, but only what His Father commanded Him to do. It was by His Father's appointment that He came to seek and save that which was lost. It was the Father who set Him apart in the counsels of eternity to the office of Priest. It was the Father who

encouraged Him to undertake it by promises of support in its accomplishment, and of glory and honour as its reward. It was the Father who in the fulness of time sent Him into our world, made of a woman, to offer His priestly Sacrifice. It was the Father's Spirit who at His baptism descended through the opened heaven, and lighted on Him. It was the Father's voice which was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "It was the Father," says Charnock, "who brought His Son from heaven to earth, and from the earth to the cross, and from the cross to the grave, making His wrath find a passage to His heart instead of our heart, pouring out His blood to keep us from bleeding. And it was the Father who raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand

in the heavens, there to urge the pleas of that blood for us, in answer to all the pleas of sin against us." In Christ's death we see not the purchase of God's love, but only the expression of it,—the outcome of it.

If now this be so, can you doubt the efficacy of this blood to cleanse us from all sin,—blood which has thus all the value which the divine nature and divine appointment can impart to it? Can you doubt the efficacy of a remedy which is in itself of infinite worth, which has the sanction of Godhead, which is in fact the contrivance of His infinite wisdom and power and love? Shall we believe that God has appointed a physician for us who has neither the skill to know what is the matter with us, nor the ability to heal? Shall we believe that the fountain opened for sin has lost its cleansing

virtue, or never had any, and that the streams thereof, though they flow from beneath the throne of the living God Himself, bear on their bosom to us only disappointment, despair, and death?

But it may be asked, While this blood should cleanse from all sin, has it in any case done so? Can you point us to evidence of its successful application? The consideration of this brings us to the *fourth* and last thing mentioned in the text which affords proof and illustration of its cleansing efficacy; which is—

4. That it has proved in times past, and is still proving, its cleansing efficacy by actually cleansing sinners from their sin. Observe the apostle's words. They are not simply . . . "which cleanseth from all sin," but which "cleanseth us." We are

evidence of its cleansing virtue. The language of the text is the language of the apostle's own personal experience. 'It can cleanse from all sin, for it has cleansed, and is still every day cleansing me. What I say and assure you of is not simply matter of doctrine, but of my own experience. I am now an old man, the last of the Lord's apostles; I have been a great sinner, and, alas! old as I am, I am still sinning, and this precious blood which with my own eyes I saw shed fifty years ago upon the cross, cleansed me at first, and is still cleansing me from all sin. I have daily recourse to it. It is my daily prayer to be sprinkled afresh by it. Oh! its cleansing virtue! From my own case I can tell you there is no sin which it cannot cleanse, no guilt and no pollution which it cannot

wash away. I am a living proof and illustration of the truth of these words which the Lord has inspired me to write.'

And this is the language of every saved sinner in the history of the past, as well as of John. If Manasseh could speak to us out of heaven he would testify, 'The blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin, for it cleansed me, even me.' If the Jerusalem sinner, who was the guilty shedder of this blood, could now address us he would say, 'It can cleanse from all sin, for it cleansed me—me, the shedder of it.' Or if Paul from his throne in heaven, or the Ethiopian Eunuch, or the Philippian Jailer, or the sensual Corinthian, or John Bunyan, or John Newton, or the Africaner, of whom I told you last Sabbath—if they could now address us from amidst their glory, they

would testify, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can cleanse from all sin, for it cleansed us.'

Yes, Brethren, lift up your eyes from these tabernacles of grace to the tabernacles of glory, and "who are these in white robes, and whence came they? These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And what is the theme of their song, the lofty and melodious strains of which float through the mansions of glory? "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

And what is the language of every saint and saved one now on earth? Is it not the same, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can cleanse from all sin, for it cleansed me'?

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast!'—
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live!'—
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."

Yes, Brethren, every sinner that has applied by faith this blood to his own case will testify with John, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, can cleanse from all sin, for it has cleansed me.'

IV.

OUR EXAMPLE.

IV.

OUR EXAMPLE.

[This Sermon is, and was meant to be, a sequel to the preceding.]

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. —1 PET. ii. 21.

CHRIST JESUS is the propitiation for our sins. He died to make an atonement for them; and His atonement or propitiation is perfect, and furnishes ground on which all sins may be forgiven, and all sinners, whatever the degree of their guilt, accepted and saved. No sinner here or anywhere else

can be forgiven and saved without an adequate atonement or propitiation; no sinner here or anywhere else can provide that atonement or propitiation for himself. But while that is true and certain, it is just as true and certain that no sinner is asked to provide it. Yea, every sinner is forbidden to make the attempt to provide it; and that for this good reason, that Christ by His death has provided it for us—an atonement or propitiation of infinite value, which needs not the aid of our worthless services or sufferings, and which is of such efficacy, that alone and of itself, "it cleanses from all sin." He is our High Priest and Sacrifice. As our High Priest He offered up to God on the altar of justice Himself as our Sacrifice; and He has now passed through the heavens, there to plead its

merit on our behalf before God. Forget not this, my Brethren, Christ is our atoning Sacrifice—a Sacrifice which has atoned for our sins, so that we have not to atone for them either in whole or in part—a Sacrifice on the ground of which all our sins may be forgiven, and that freely on this spot and at this moment.

There is another aspect of Christ's work to which I ask your attention for a little, one of vast importance to us, and which should be daily before our mind, and that is His example. He is our Sacrifice and High Priest to whom we are to look for pardon. But He is more: He is the example, the model after which we are to fashion our character and life. Peter, you will observe, says, "that He has left us an example that ye should follow His steps." Nor is

this the only passage in which this is asserted. "Learn of me," He says in Matthew, "for I am meek and lowly of heart;" and again, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." And it is said in Romans, that we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son." But I need not accumulate texts. All Scripture makes it plain, that He is the example that we are in all things to copy. He is the pattern man, and to His pattern we are to conform ourselves. God as our King and Lawgiver has given us a law, and precepts and ordinances which we are to obey—according to which we are to regulate our outward conduct and our inward thoughts and feelings. But He has done more. He has set before us an example—a clear per-

fect example, in which these laws and precepts and ordinances are embodied in practical life, so that we not only know what He wishes us to be and do, but we see it actually exemplified in what Christ was and did. We have not only the rule of our life, but we have that rule reduced to practice, and perfectly followed out in the life of Christ. God points us to His law and will as recorded in His Book, and says, 'That is what I wish you to obey;' and He points us to His incarnate Son and says, 'That is the model I wish you to copy, the example which I wish you in all things to imitate.'

In considering Christ as our example we shall call your attention—I. To His *fitness* to leave us an example. II. To some of the *characteristics* of the example

He has left us. III. To some of the more *prominent points* in the example He has left us. IV. To some of the *motives* which should induce to copy the example He has left us.

I. His *fitness* to leave us an example. It may be said or thought, 'How can Christ be an example to us? He is altogether different from us. Was He not possessed of a different nature? Was He not in different circumstances? How then can we be expected to be what He was, or to do what He did? How can such a one be imitable by us?'

I reply, that these questions are founded on a mistake. He was in every point to which our obedience extends fitted to be an example to us.

(1.) *First* of all; He was a man, as truly

human as any one of us. He had our nature, in all its reality, completeness, and even sinless infirmities. It is true He was and is God, the mighty God, God over all. But He was not less truly man, "born of a woman," "bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh." His human nature was as real as ours, His body was as really human as ours, His soul in its endowments of reason, memory, affection, imagination, and will, was as really human as ours. Though united to the Divine, it was not overshadowed, or absorbed, or destroyed by the Divine. You are not more human than He was, and continues to be. In being called therefore to copy His example you are called to copy the example of a man, a brother, a partaker of our common humanity, "the man Christ Jesus."

Had He not possessed our nature in union with His Divine, but a different and superior nature, as the angelic, He would not, in regard to many things we are required to do, have been fitted to be an example to us. The angelic and human natures being so different, the one cannot be a model for the other. An example must be in some sense upon a level with those who essay to imitate it. And such is the example of Christ. He descended to our level. He took our nature, and is thus, in virtue of His humanity, imitable by us.

(2.) *Secondly*, He was not only man, "the man Christ Jesus," possessing our nature, but He was also man in our circumstances and condition. He was in the world as we are in it. Had He been a stranger to our condition and circumstances, and known

nothing of them by experience, or had He been in a condition and in circumstances totally different from ours, His example, however excellent and perfect, might have been such that we could not copy it. What He was and did in His peculiar circumstances and condition might have been no guide to us as to what we are to be and do in ours. In ordinary life, for example, there are many things in which a rich man is not fitted to be an example to a poor, and a poor man to a rich. The one cannot tell how the other should feel and act in circumstances of which he himself has no experience. From this difference of circumstances he cannot be a fitting model for the other in all things to copy.

With Christ it is otherwise: He was not only a man, but a man in our condition and

circumstances; and therefore His life both in spirit and in act is a fitting model for our imitation—sets before us what our life in spirit and act should ever be. Take some illustrations of this.

(*a.*) He lived under the same law, the same holy and just and good law as we do. The law which He was required to obey, and which He obeyed so perfectly, is the self-same law which we are required to obey. We are not asked to be or do anything different from Him. The path in which we are appointed to walk is the very path in which He has gone before us. His footsteps, His foot-prints are, so to speak, everywhere and distinctly marked on it, and it is these we are enjoined to follow. He was not made and did not live under a different law from us. The law under which we live was the

law which He so cordially loved and so perfectly obeyed.

(*b.*) He stood in the same relations in life as we do, and is therefore fitted to be to us an example, the steps of which we may and should follow. There is no relationship in life, whether superior or subordinate, the obligations of which did not and do not find in His example a living and most persuasive sanction.

He was sprung as to His humanity from a line of kings, and had during His sojourn on earth the full conciousness of His kingly dignity. "Therefore Pilate saith unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth"—the truth of my regal character and

power. Being a king in His example, He is a model which even royalty should copy.

Like us He was a subject; and He honoured all lawful authority, "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," and never giving countenance to ambition, disloyalty, or revolt, and therefore in this respect He is fitted to be a model to us. In Him, as the citizen and subject, we see what we as citizens and subjects should be.

He was a son—had a human mother as truly as any one of us—and as such was subject to His parents, honouring his father and his mother; and therefore in this respect He is fitted to be a model to every son and daughter, a pattern which they should closely follow. His filial affection and obedience constitute a bright gem in the crown of His human excellencies, and

why should they not be a bright gem in theirs?

He was a brother—a real brother—with real brothers and sisters, and therefore in His fraternal kindness and affection He is a pattern to all brothers and sisters.

He was a servant—took the form and did the work of a servant both to God and man, and is therefore fitted in the spirit, the temper, and character of His service to be to all servants a pattern which they should copy.

He was a master—for one is our Master, even Christ—and as a master He taught and commanded all that was right and kind, and only what was right and kind, and therefore is a fitting pattern for all masters to imitate.

Though he was not a husband and a father in the literal sense, He stood in His

principles and affections most manifestly in these relations to His whole redeemed Church, and is therefore in what He did and felt fitted to be an example to all husbands and fathers. In short, He had not only the same nature as we, not only lived under the same law as we, but stood in the same relations.

(*c.*) But further, he had full experience of all the circumstances in which we can be placed.

He was once a feeble and helpless child, passed through a childhood and boyhood as real and true as our own, and therefore He is fitted to be an example even to children, leaving behind Him footprints on the path of life which even they may discern and follow. And though He did not reach old age, having died in the prime of manhood at the

age of thirty-three, with no vital power impaired or weakened by disease or decay, "so that when He died on the cross the keenest, strongest life of which human nature is capable was wrung out of Him by a protracted torture"—I say, though He did not reach old age, yet in His labours and griefs and sufferings He had a taste of what its infirmities and sorrows are, and thus He has left an example which even the hoary head should follow.

He was rich, richer than any one can be, rich, and for our sakes became poor, and is a model worthy of the imitation of the rich, and the imitation of which would be a blessing to the world and especially to themselves.

But He was also poor—poor as the poorest—had not where to lay His head, and is

therefore in all that He felt and did an example to the poorest in the land.

He was tempted and reproached—was misunderstood and misrepresented, and that more than any ever was. He suffered; He suffered from the treachery, ingratitude, and folly of those He sought to benefit; He experienced the keenest severity of bodily pain; He had to weep over the ravages of death, to sorrow with Martha and Mary over the death of their brother; He knew what it was to anticipate death for Himself, and that in its most appalling form, to experience the shrinking of nature from it, and at length to fall before it.

In all these circumstances He was placed, and thus has become a fitting example to us when placed in them.

But I need not multiply illustrations.

When now you consider that Christ was man as truly as we, that He lived under the same law, stood in the same relations, and was placed in the same circumstances in life as we, is He not in all respects qualified to be an example to us?

But it may be said He was more than man —He was God as well. And does not that place Him beyond our sphere, beyond the reach of any serious imitation on our part? Does not that strip, so to speak, His human life of all value as an ethical model of, and to, mere humanity?

To this I answer, that in His Divine attributes He is certainly beyond our imitation; "we can but adore a boundless Intelligence or a resistless Will." But His human moral characteristics are not beyond our imitation, for though perfect they are still

human, and are not, after the manner of the Divine, out of our reach. His Divinity does not disturb by any means the outline of that model which is supplied by His manhood. "As the friend of publicans and sinners, as the consoler of those who suffer as the helper of those who want, Jesus Christ is at home among us. We can copy Him, though imperfectly, at once in the outward activities of charity and in His inward temper." That in our present state of sin we cannot copy Him fully—that does not make it less true that He is a fitting model for us to copy, and that a close imitation of Him is at once our duty and our privilege.

II. Some *characteristics* of the example, or model for imitation which He has left us; and I make these two remarks about it:—

(1.) It is plain and distinct. Every step

in the footsteps He has left behind Him can easily be traced—in other words, His example is clearly revealed, and may easily be apprehended. There is nothing recondite —no obscurity about it to dim its features and to prevent us from ascertaining what they really are. It is recorded in the fourfold history of His life contained in the Gospels. What He was as a man, what He said, what He did, what He felt as a man when He dwelt among us, is there set down for our study in the plainest language, and in the most attractive form, so that every one of us may see without difficulty how we are to deport ourselves at all times, on all general and on all special occasions. We have but to turn to the model as there presented, and see distinctly traced what we are to copy. How He felt and acted

when mingling with men in social intercourse, or when suffering from poverty, when reproached, insulted, persecuted, when bereaved, when deserted, when dying—all that is vividly set forth in the portraiture of Him given by the evangelists and apostles. And when I look at it, I can be in no difficulty or perplexity as to how I am to act in similar circumstances. His example is a model set in the clearest light; distinctly marked in every feature, and expression, and line, and a model, too, which I can have always with me. It is portable—in a pocket form, so to speak. An artist cannot always have his model with him, to fashion his copy after it; but I can. I can always have my Bible, and in that Bible I have the model after which I am to fashion both my outer and inner life.

(2.) His example is perfect, and therefore one that can be safely followed in regard to every point embraced in it. It is not only a practicable but a perfect embodiment of God's will. It is all that God wishes us to be. He has not only given to us a perfect law, He has shown us in the obedience of the "Man Christ Jesus" that that law may be, as well as ought to be, perfectly obeyed in our nature, that its precepts are not impracticable precepts, but precepts which, in letter and spirit, are perfectly suited to us, and should be perfectly obeyed by us. Our Lord's example is faultless; it presents to us a faultless ideal of moral excellence. He is all fair, there is no spot in Him, and therefore I say His example is a safe one.

Had it been otherwise, or not perfect;

had there been flaw or defect in it, His example would neither have been suitable nor safe; it would have been a perilous thing for us to follow it; it would have led us astray. The reason is obvious. We are depraved, sinful tendencies are in the best of us; and from that depravity, from the influence of these sinful tendencies, we would have been more disposed to imitate what was bad or defective in our Lord's example, had there been anything bad or defective in it, than what was good and right, and alone worthy of imitation. The defect or flaw would have been universally copied and exaggerated. But it was all perfect, and therefore it is safe for us to follow, in every step, the example which He has left us. "It is the will of God in every point carried out, and our highest

style," the highest of man, is to be like it. The most general, and at the same time the most exact description of His character is, that He perfectly obeyed the law of God. In His inward emotions, in His outward conduct, He was all that the law enjoined or implied. He fulfilled it spiritually; He fulfilled it to the letter; He fulfilled it affirmatively, doing what the law requires; and He fulfilled it negatively, not doing what the law forbids. He had but one heart, and that heart was God's, a whole heart, a pure heart, a heart never debased by an unworthy thought; a throne that was never usurped by a rival Deity; a marble tablet pure and burnished from its native quarry, on which was never engraven any tale of shame, and where suspicion never threw its doubtful shadow. He was at His

birth, and continued to be throughout life, "the Holy One." In Him all holiness, all virtue, all goodness shine and sparkle with a beauty and lustre transcending all expression. His example is not only good but perfect, and may be and ought to be in all points studied and copied. You are ever, and in all things, right when you copy Him; you are ever, and in everything, wrong in proportion as you fail to copy Him.

III. Some *prominent points* in the example He has left us which we should be specially careful to copy. In all He is to be copied, but I wish your attention to the following more particularly :—

(1.) His humility and meekness. "He was meek and lowly of heart." He had no pride, and was so humble that He con-

descended to undertake the meanest service —"He washed His disciples' feet."

And He was so meek that He never resented an injury, but gently reproved and forgave it. "He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;" "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He was slow to wrath, slow to take offence, slow to resent it, ready to forgive it. How much need is there among professing Christians for a closer imitation of Christ in respect of this! How ready are they to give way to anger and irritability! How soon is their pride offended and their temper ruffled! How prone to take offence, how prompt to resent it, how slow to forgive and forget it, and that too, without

considering, or in conscious disregard of the injury they are thereby doing to the cause and honour of the Redeemer! And how often, like the heathen nations in our Lord's day, do they delude themselves into the belief that this unholy tendency is a virtue and not a vice, a sign of a manly, honest outspokenness, and value themselves on account of it, when, if they would look to Christ their example, they would find no trace of it there, but only what is a standing and stern condemnation of it!

My Brethren, have you this feature of Christ's character? are you striving to imitate the meekness and gentleness of Christ? Ah, Brethren, if a stranger to Christianity were to follow us into our families, into the intercourse of daily life, or into our Church courts and Church

meetings, and there hear our passionate utterances, our intemperate language, and see our readiness to take offence, and to repel in harsh terms what others say if it seem to reflect on us, would he ever imagine that our Lord and Master had said to us, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart"? Oh, my Brethren, when the passionate impulse is stirring, the evil temper rising, the ready tongue about to give utterance to the angry and unadvised word—oh, I say, do listen to our Lord's gentle words, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." If He was meek and lowly, how much more should we, who deserve only shame and everlasting contempt!

(2.) Another point in His example to which I ask your attention is His prayerful-

ness. He was the man Christ Jesus, and as such He was emphatically and characteristically a man of prayer. He lived in the closest communion with His Father—spending hours with Him in prayer, rising up early for prayer, yea, continuing whole nights in prayer. In this He found His comfort and solace; by this He was supported as to His humanity in His appointed work. He loved to be alone with God. No employment, no society, no trials, no fatigue, no pressure of engagements ever prevented His intercourse with God and heaven.

My Hearer, are you copying the example of Christ in this point? Are you given to prayer? Do you love to bow the knee in secret, and in your family, to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? If

Christ regarded prayer not merely as a duty and a privilege, but as a necessity without which He could not have got on in His appointed work, how much more should we regard it as a necessity? Where are you to find your support in trial, your strength for duty, your guidance, your comfort, your safety, if not in God? And how can you obtain them without prayer? Is He Christ-like, who does not, like Christ, pray? If this feature of His example be wanting, every other feature must be wanting too. A man cannot be a Christian without prayer. Breathing is essential to living, and prayer is the Christian's vital breath. Beware of living a prayerless life. Copy Christ. He would take you by the hand, would lead you into the chamber of devotion, would place you near Himself, would

pour out a prayer for you, would ask you to pour out your heart where He is pouring out His, and would assure you of the good things you pray for in His name. Can you refuse this to Him?

(3.) Another prominent point in His example is His reverence for the Sabbath and the sanctuary.

He honoured the Sabbath, defended its divine institution and permanent obligation, showing that it was made for man as man, not as a Jew merely, but as man; made for his benefit in all ages, as essential to his wellbeing physically, morally, and spiritually, and given him to be prized, preserved, improved. He never mis-spent or profaned it, or thought it too much time to be abstracted from the affairs of earth.

And he revered the sanctuary as well.

He went into the synagogue "as was His wont," we are told. His place there was never vacant when it should and might have been filled. His history, as recorded in the Gospels, brings this out very prominently. He never omitted the public worship of God, never felt it burdensome, and never slumbered and slept during the service. Whoever was there, He was there; whoever attended to what was spoken, He attended. He never allowed other engagements to interfere with His worship of God in God's house. If any could have pleaded pressure of engagements to justify absence, He might have done so. He had vast concerns committed to His trust, more important and more engrossing than the urgent necessities of poverty, the exacting demands of business or of wealth, and the weighty

responsibilities of kings and cabinets, but these were never allowed needlessly to come between Him and the observance of the Sabbath and the public worship of His God.

My Hearer, do you copy Christ's example in this? Do you love the Sabbath and the sanctuary? In the words of Scripture, do you "call the Sabbath a delight"? and do you "love the habitation of God's house"? Should we be negligent in the observance of the Sabbath and its worship when the Lord of the Sabbath was so careful in the observance of them? And if the observance of them was beneficial even to Him, how much more to us?

My Hearer, would you sometimes put this question to yourself: Would Christ, were He in my circumstances, spend the Sabbath as I often spend it? Would He

absent Himself from the house of God as I sometimes do?

(4.) A fourth point or feature in His example is His confidence in God His Father. Amid all His trials and sufferings from first to last, Christ's confidence in His Father was never lost or even lessened. He ever believed in His wisdom, power, and love, and care; was always sure that every dispensation of His Father's providence toward Him, however threatening, painful, or overwhelming, was just what it ought to be; that His Father's will was ever good, ever right; all the expression of His infinite love; and He would not have had it otherwise. "Even so, Father," He said on one occasion, "for so it seemeth good in thy sight." In Gethsemane, amid His agony and bloody sweat, while He prayed that the

cup might pass from Him, He adds, such was His implicit confidence in His Father's character and doings, "not My will, but Thine be done." And even on the cross, when His Father hid His face from Him and seemed to have deserted Him, His confidence is in no degree shaken. Amid the anguish and blackness of that terrible hour of desertion He still calls him "My God:" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Imitate Christ in this feature of His example. Trust your heavenly Father. Amid all trials and difficulties, hold fast your confidence in Him. Your trials and difficulties may be painful, perplexing, prolonged. You may see no way of escape. All things may seem to be against you. Nevertheless, amid all, and in spite of all,

confide in God. Say, "I will trust and not be afraid." Rely on Him, in the faith that in permitting these trials and afflictions to come on you He is doing what is best; that He is actuated by a wise and loving regard for you; that He afflicts you not for His pleasure, but solely and entirely for your profit. Look up to Him, yes, from the very depths, and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

My Brethren, Christ was a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs," but He was also a Man of abounding and abiding peace, so much so that He could wish for nothing better for His disciples than that "His joy might remain in them," and could leave them no better legacy than His peace: "My peace I leave with you." And whence did His peace and joy spring?

From His perfect, unflinching confidence in God. In His case the promise in its highest sense was fulfilled, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." My Hearers, confide, as He did, in your heavenly Father, and you will have the same peace and joy. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee."

(5.) His sympathy with human suffering and sorrow, from whatever cause arising. How tenderly He felt for the sufferers, whether in body or in mind, who came or were brought to Him! How kindly He listened to them and spoke! How His compassion went out to them! He had the heart of a man, all the affections of a man, and that in the highest state of holy sensibility.

How deeply He was affected by the case of Jairus, who had lost his little daughter, and by that of the widow of Nain, as she followed her only son to an early grave! How He "groaned in spirit" and wept as He stood with the sisters at the grave of their brother Lazarus! How tenderly He dealt with the woman who was a sinner, in her lowly penitence! How keenly He was touched with the sorrow and distress of the poor, the afflicted, the fallen! He was "moved with compassion for the multitude when He saw that they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." When He drew nigh and beheld Jerusalem, and thought of its coming doom, He wept over it.

My Brethren, have you any resemblance to Christ in this feature of His example?

Do you feel for human sorrow and suffering which so abound? Do you search it out and try to relieve it? Does the sight of it touch you and call forth the kind word and the kind deed? Yes, I say deed as well as word. Does your sympathy lead you to succour and relieve? Oh, my Brethren, believe me, that is not a sympathy like Christ's which does nothing, which expends itself in mere feeling, which says to the poor, "Be ye warmed and be ye clothed," but which does nothing and gives nothing in order that the needed heat and clothing may be procured!

In particular, has the Gospel made you kind, tender-hearted, and sympathising toward your Christian brethren? Do you rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep? Are you imitating

Christ in this matter? Have you this proof that you belong to His mystical body? In the human body, if one member suffer all the members suffer; so it is with Christ's mystical body the Church. Do your suffering brethren share your sympathy? your poorer brethren your bounty? There is a remark of the late Dr. M'Crie which I read lately—it is true, and well worthy of being remembered: "Compassion for the temporal distresses of our fellow-creatures is not a sure mark of godliness, but the want of it is an indubitable mark of ungodliness. 'For whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'"

(6.) In connection with the foregoing I

call your attention to another point in His example, and that is His usefulness.

No one that has lived on earth ever so tried to be useful as He did, ever so laid Himself out to do good to the bodies and souls of men, ever so earnestly and so perseveringly, and, amid so many chilling discouragements, prosecuted the work of good-doing. Peter describes Him by this characteristic, "who went about doing good." His whole mind and heart and hands were given to this. It was an art He had studied well, and it was the care and business of every day to practise it. He was not content with being harmless. He had a higher aim, that of being useful. He was not content with mere sympathy, He gave expression to His sympathy in good-doing, and consecrated all His energies to the work

of enlightening the ignorance, alleviating the sorrows, purifying and ennobling the lot of fallen man.

My Brethren, are you cultivating this feature of our Lord's example? Are you trying to do good to the souls and bodies of your fellow-men?

However humble your position, however narrow your means, you can be useful—you have abundant scope for being useful. Are you trying to be useful? Can it be said of you in any true sense, "he went about doing good"? Is it your wish to walk in your Lord's footsteps in regard to this matter? Have you ever put to yourself the question, "How can I be useful? Might I not be more useful than I am? Am I doing as much good as I might with my time and talents and opportunity and money?"

I doubt if that man be a Christian, I doubt if the road in which he is walking be the road to heaven, who is not wishing and trying to be useful, and to diminish the amount of human misery, physical and moral, which he sees everywhere around him. In the road that leads to heaven you will find the marks of our Lord's footsteps as He went about doing good. And if, in the path in which you are walking, you do not find the marks of these steps and are not following them, depend upon it you are not in the road that leads to heaven.

My Hearer, wherever the road in which you are walking leads to, it does not lead to heaven and glory, unless it be a road in which you distinctly see the footsteps Christ has left when He "went about doing good," unless it be the road marked out by the tread,

the busy and unwearied tread of His good-doing.

Such are some of the more prominent points in the example which Christ has left us. Notice now—

IV. Some of the *motives* which should induce us to imitate or copy the example Christ has left us.

(1.) The design of the Gospel is just to make us like Christ; and practical religion just consists in adopting and following His example.

Practical religion does not consist simply in the adoption of a right creed or right views of Gospel truth. There can be no practical religion without a right creed or right views of Gospel truth. That lies at the foundation of all religion and godliness. But practical religion is something more than a right creed,

it is that creed embodied in holy life and character, in a growing conformity to Christ and the example He has left us. Not to follow the example of Christ is just not to be what the Gospel designs to make us, is just not to be religious, not to be partakers of practical Christianity. My Hearer, will you bear this in mind, that religion, practical religion, that religion without which no man can be a Christian, consists in the imitation of Christ?

(2.) That the perfection of heaven consists in perfect conformity to Christ. All in heaven are like Him, like Him in all the holy attributes of His human character. If now, my Hearer, you are not like Him, you cannot be in heaven with Him. What is more, you cannot be like Him there, unless you be like Him here. The likeness must be begun here.

There must be the imitation of the example here, ere there can be the perfect conformity to it there. The footsteps of Christ must be followed here if you would reach His presence and dwell with Him there.

What remains then, Brethren, but that we follow Christ, that we be imitators of Him? Study His example as set before you in the Sacred Volume, study it, not to admire it merely, or to see how far you come short of it, but with the earnest wish and prayer and determination to be conformed to it. Be like Christ, that the world may see in you what the likeness of Christ is. Walk in His footsteps, that the world may see what these footsteps are, and whither they lead. Dishonour not Christ by assuming His name, while you bear no resemblance to His character. What can the world think of Christ if

they are to judge of His character by what many are who bear His name? Be like Christ, or renounce His name. Alexander the Great said to a person of the same name who was a great coward, "Either be like me or renounce my name." To you here, members of His Church, and who were last Sabbath at His table, we would say, Be like Christ, or renounce His name.

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